The Garbage Man

a

Parade with Shouting

by

John Dos Passos

Author of

Manhattan Transfer

THE GARBAGE MAN

Also by John dos Passos:

MANHATTAN TRANSFER

A Novel

D. H. Lawrence. "The best modern book about New York that I have read. It is an endless series of glimpses of people in the vast scuffle of Manhattan Island . . . . the book becomes what life is, a stream of different things and different faces rushing along in the consciousness, with no apparent direction save that of time, from past to present, from youth to age, from birth to death, and no apparent goal at all."

New Statesman. "*Manhattan Transfer* combines the large-scale canvas of *Three Soldiers* with the rich and delicate colouring of *Streets of Night.* Mr. dos Passos writes a rich, graphic style, which makes almost each separate sentence a thing to admire for its verbal workmanship. The book abounds in passages which are the product of a keen eye and a copious, but judiciously manipulated vocabulary. . . *Manhattan Transfer* ranks with *Martin Arrowsmith* and *An American Tragedy* as one of the most noteworthy novels recently introduced here from America."

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A Parade with Shouting

By

JOHN DOS PASSOS

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THE GARBAGE MAN

A Parade with Shouting

Part One

Scene I. A DROP SHOWING FACTORY WINDOWS AND CHIMNEYS. WINTER DAWN.

Scene II. THE HALLWAY OF AN OLD HOUSE. DEATH.

Scene III. SAME. THE FUNERAL.

Scene IV. THE SMASHUP.

Part Two

Scene I. UNION SQUARE. THE MILLION-DOLLAR GEM ROBBERY.

Scene II. A BACKYARD IN GREENWICH VILLAGE. THE PROSPERITY PARADE.

Scene III. A DROP SHOWING FACTORY WINDOWS AND CHIMNEYS.

Scene IV. A DROP SHOWING STARS.

THE GARBAGE MAN

Part One

CHARACTERS

(In order in which they appear)

Part One

Bud

Jake

Workmen

Tom

Jane

Nurse

The Family Practitioner

John the Butler

Aunt Georgiana

Cousin Amelia

Cousin Frank Wilmot

Aunt Marianna

Uncle William

Male and Female Relatives

Uncle Amos

Mr. Brickstone

Undertakers

Fat Man

Colored Porter

The Wrecking Gang

Bill

The Man in Black Overalls

Stretcherbearers

A Man with a Lantern

THE GARBAGE MAN

A Parade with Shouting

Part One

SCENE 1

After a shrill overture of some long-drawn crooning tune the music rises into the wail of six o'clock factory whistles. The curtains part showing a painted drop of factories, endless perspectives of gutted windows, craning chimneys, in the blue light of a winter dawn. Workmen in overalls swinging dinnerpails and bags of tools cross the stage.

BUD

Man it's a cold morning to tumble outa bed.

JAKE

Ain't no use bein' aloive a cold mornin' like dis.

BUD

It'll be hot enough in that there furnace room feller.

JAKE

Kerist it'll be hot.

BUD

When you ain't too hot yer too cold, when you ain't too cold you're too hot . . . ain't it de trutt?

[*More men cross hurrying to work. Gradually a humming begins rising into the gasp and sob of a vast powerplant. Under it flutter a few rags of a waltz on violins.*]

[TOM *and* JANE *come in as the last workmen cross. She has a fur coat over her balldress.* TOM *is a skinny brownfaced young man with restless eyes. He carries his hat in his hand, his open overcoat shows his white shirtfront, his tie has come undone.*]

TOM

I never would have thought morning could come so soon.

JANE

It was a nice party wasn't it?

TOM

I hated it. . . . I hated everybody there but you.

JANE

[*Begins to hum "I'm just wild about Harree." The music picks it up inquisitively.*]

You liked this didn't you?

[TOM *throws his arms round her and they dance awkwardly. The music falters and breaks off into a new swell of sound from the powerplant that fades again immediately into a distant humming.*]

TOM

Listen.

Everybody's at work already.

Gives you a funny feeling to have people at work and us . . . like this.

JANE

They'll put us to work soon enough. . . . Don't worry.

TOM

I don't worry.

It's morning and we're both of us alive and not dead. It's morning and we've both of us got eyes and ears and noses to smell with and tongues to taste with and lips to kiss.

And we're full of ragtime and champagne punch.

We're chockfull of dancing the way honey's full of sweet.

Oh Jane.

[*They grab hands and swing each other round and round like children. The long rattle of a snaredrum breaks into onesteps. The sound of engines soars pounding behind the curtain. They stand close together frightened.*]

JANE

Listen, they're angry at us.

TOM

They don't want us to be happy. They want us to be shoveling coal, pounding typewriters, filling greasecups.

JANE

Listen, its a kind of whirling music like a merry-go-round.

Shall we get on the pink pig or the dragon or the wooden white horse? Whee I guess its the wooden horse.

[*A jerky wheezy tune comes out of the music, played too fast like on a calliope. Fades.*]

TOM

Why can't we be always like this?

JANE

Ou it's terribly cold this morning. Somebody's walking over my grave. Mother'll be asking for me. I've got to be getting home. What time is it?

TOM

[*Takes his watch and throws it across the stage.*] Oh it's no time.

JANE

It scares me when you act crazy like that. Come along home. . . . And I promised mother I'd leave the dance at two.

TOM

Oh let's not ever go home. Let's be always like this.

JANE

But how could we live?

TOM

We'd pick up raindrops for quarters. We'd skim greenbacks off the rollers out at sea. There's a lot of gold in your hair Jane.

JANE

They'd make us work till our hands couldn't feel and our faces were gray and our eyes were blank. Tom listen to the engine in the powerplant. That's all people. The engines are made out of people pounded into steel. The power's stretched on the muscles of people, the light's sucked out of people's eyes.

TOM

But just you and me'd be happy.

JANE

Maybe.

TOM

It's not happy the way we're living now.

JANE

[*In a low sleepy voice as they go off*]
No. No. No.

[*The rhythm of the powerplant rises triumphant, goes off as the curtains come together into a song like "Massa's in de Cold Cold Ground" played on the full orchestra.*]

SCENE 2

The painted scene presents in baroque perspective the hallway of an old house that has penned the righteousness of three generations into its high gloomy rooms. The walls are arsenic green blotched with yellowing crimson bouquets. In the center a wide crimson-curtained door leads into the parlor. The stairs are left (as seen from the audience). Above the parlor door there is a landing with a colonial rail and a door into a bedroom. JANE *sits hugging her knees on the bottom step of the stairs.* TOM *lies flat on his belly on the little space where the stairs turn, his face on a level with hers. The music has faded out sourly on a few bars of "My Old Kentucky Home." There is a spotlight on them.*

TOM

[*Dreamily half-singing*]
When I was a little kid
and they'd sent me to bed and it was still bright
I used to sit shaking
on the edge of the bed listening to the shuffling feet
and thought how the moon
like a gong hung above the asphalt shuffling street
and wished
I could climb the Flatiron or Jack's beanstalk
through the terrible twilight
and clench my fists and beat. . . . .

JANE

We were both mighty little then under the lilac
in mother's backyard
You used to tell me how when you'ld beat on the
moon
You'ld beat so loud and hard
that the mean clacking footsteps of men scurrying
through the gloaming
treading Don't and Mustnot
would be gone when I'd counted ten blown off on a
cyclone
of ragtime and foxtrot.
[*The spotlight goes off.*]

TOM

If all our kid's make believe had only been real.

JANE

It was to you. I was the doubting Thomas. Women are so funny.

I never believed the moon was a gong at all. I knew it was made of Roquefort cheese.

TOM

[*After a pause in a changed voice*]
What about your mother?

JANE

[*Shrugging her shoulders*]
Well?

TOM

It's nearly over at last isn't it?

JANE

It's nearly over at last.

TOM

And afterwards?

JANE

How should I know?

TOM

At least you'll get away from all this, away from this house that's like a cage to you.
[*The music interposes, "Bird in a Cage" derisively.*]

JANE

[*Coldly*]
You have gotten away. Are you so happy?

TOM

[*With his face in his hands*]
No.

JANE

I am a woman. The hungry generations . . .

TOM

[*In a low voice*]
. . . tread thee down. [*Jumping up and striding about the hall.*] By God they shan't. . . . You're too wonderful.

JANE

What about mother? Wasn't she wonderful too, once?

TOM

In this very house. She had the same wide eyes you have Jane, the same golden brown.

Can't you see her in a crinoline, sitting where you are sitting.

Oh but things are different now. We value life more. We are less afraid of happiness.

JANE

I wonder.
[*A long pause.*]

TOM

[*Tenderly*]
Jane when we are free . . .

JANE

I must go back to mother now.

TOM

Has she been able to speak?

JANE

No she will never say a word again.

TOM

It's hideous how unreasonably life clings.

JANE

[*With sudden hysterical irritation*]
How do you know it's unreasonable?
Who are you to judge somebody's right to breathe?
If there were a garbage man in the world who carried off all the dead-alive don't you know we would go too?

TOM

[*In a heart broken voice*]
It's all these dead people who have lived in this house.
[*The door on the landing opens. A nurse in white leans over and hisses in a spiteful whisper:*]

NURSE

Miss Carroll, you and your friend really must keep quiet. You should have more consideration, for me at any rate. You had better come up anyway.

JANE

Tom go home and go to bed.

NURSE

[*Continuing*]
You may have to regret it to your dying day if you don't.

TOM

[*Puts his arm around her shoulder awkwardly*]
Don't let them torture you, Jane.
[*Goes out front door.*]
[JANE *turns off the light in the lower hall. Faint orange glow comes from the room above. The nurse stands out lean and tall against it, closes the door with an impatient snap. The stage is completely dark.*]

JANE

[*Gives a little cry half way up the stairs*]
Who's that?

MAN'S VOICE

[*A very old rasping voice*]
Who do you think, young lady?

JANE

Oh it's Dr. Thompson. I didn't know you were here. One minute there's a light on the landing.

MAN'S VOICE

No I'm not Dr. Thompson, I have taken his place.

JANE

How do you find mother?

MAN'S VOICE

As I find them all.

JANE

What do you mean? Who are you?

MAN'S VOICE

[*Laughs*]
Oh a sort of family practitioner. When there is nothing more to be done I . . .

JANE

[*Screams*]
Let me by.

MAN'S VOICE

Why I'm not in your way, young lady.

[JANE'S *breathing, heavy, frightened, from the landing. She snaps on the light. At the foot of the stairs is a tall rawboned man in a black frock coat; in one gloved hand he carries the regulation little black bag of the stage doctor, in the other a derby hat; on his fleshless chalkwhite face the small pointed beard has an incongruous look as if it were a disguise.*]

JANE

[*Leaning far over the banisters*]
Tell me who you are.

THE FAMILY PRACTITIONER

[*Laughing*]
Shall I? Shall I?

JANE

[*Staring at him motionless*]
Tell me who you are.

THE FAMILY PRACTITIONER

Oh I tend the very best people. I dress specially when I come to a refined family like this.

How do you like my hat; very genteel, don't you think so? Especially I want no jarring note.

[*He bows three times bringing the hat up to his chest with a sweep.*]

Taste! . . . Discretion! . . . Tact!

JANE

Tell me who you are.

THE FAMILY PRACTITIONER

Oh it all comes back, young lady. How like your grandmother you are. She stood leaning against that clock staring at me with wide brown eyes. I wore side-whiskers then, and a tall hat. But, if you will permit one very old to make you a compliment, her eyes were not so fine as yours. Permit me to wish you a very good night.

[*Goes out noiselessly.*]

[JANE *gives a very low a sudden choked scream, then remains staring straight in front of her. Suddenly she buries her face in her arms. The bedroom door opens slowly. The Nurse gives a start when she notices* JANE'S *attitude.*]

NURSE

Oh you know. [*Putting her arms round* JANE.] Poor Miss Carroll. It is for the best. Tell yourself it is for the best. Everything is always for the best.

JANE

[*Looking at her blankly*]
What shall I do?
[*The sentence breaks off in a little hard sob.* JANE *stands a moment in the doorway with her head thrown back, then goes into the room.*]

NURSE

[*Speaking to herself in a flustered little voice*]
Oh and the doctor not here. All alone with that girl. How dreadful. . . . Lights! That's it, lights.
[*At the switch beside the door she turns on all the lights in the upper and lower halls. Then she goes to the 'phone; her voice becomes hard and professional.*]
Main 1920. . . . Main 1920? Dr. Thompson, please. . . . Dr. Thompson, the expected has happened. Mrs. Carroll. . . . Please come round at once. Yes I know what to do. Thanks. . . . North 709. . . . Mrs. Riverson, please. . . . Mrs. Riverson, it's a shame to get you up so late. [*Her voice becomes very oily.*] This is the nurse at Mrs. Carroll's. Yes, and I am afraid there is no more hope. Tell yourself it's for the best, everything is for the best in this world. . . . No don't hurry. . . . It's no use. Mrs. Carroll die . . . deceased a few minutes ago. . . . No I am attending to everything. . . . What did you say? . . . Of course not Mrs.

Riverson. I know nothing about the will at all. Of course I won't touch any papers. . . . Goodbye, dear Mrs. Riverson, and remember that God always does everything for the best. [*She puts up the receiver, stands thinking a minute, then takes it down again.*] Main 2237. [*Jane comes out on the landing and starts looking at her dazedly.*] Oh do go and lay down, Miss Carroll. If you sleep you'll wake up thinking everything is for the best.

JANE

[*Sobbing*]
Poor mother.

NURSE

[*Hastily*]
Oh do go and lay down.

Look if you want to distract yourself, why don't you look for the will in your mother's desk. You know what families are.

I am attending to the last painful offices. . . . Hello is this Main 2237? . . . [*Again in her oily voice.*] The last painful offices . . .

JANE

As if I didn't have my inheritance . . .

NURSE

[*In a singsong tone*]
What, dear Miss Carroll?

JANE

Whether I want it or not.

NURSE

[*Spitefully into the telephone*]
Will you get me Main 2237?
[*A jerky medley of scrambled funeral marches as the curtains come together.*]

SCENE 3

The hall is dark; for all the shutters in the house are closed. Yellow light filters down from the upper hall. Whenever the front door is opened bright sunshine, growing red with evening toward the end of the act, cuts a great swath of brilliance across the stage. JOHN *the butler, a leanfaced colored man with bulging eyes, stands against the drawn curtains of the parlor door, in his arms a huge wreath of purple orchids.*

JOHN

[*Enthusiastically*]
A pile o' money dem flowers has cost. . . . An

when de rich folks dies does deir souls float up on the smell o' de hothouse flowers? . . .

[*He goes into the parlor, shielding the flowers from the touch of the curtains with his arms.*]

[AUNT GEORGIANA RIVERSON, *a blond ample woman, floridly dressed in black enters gyrating to a tinkling waltz.*]

AUNT GEORGIANA

[*When she stands still the music stops*]

I'm going to fetch Mr. Brickstone myself in the Packard so there can be no mistake. People are always having to wait for the minister at weddings and funerals. It's always embarrassing and people are always so busy nowadays. Just think if I hadn't been here, you poor little girl. You know Jane I never felt you kept up your position enough socially. . . . Judge Carroll was one of the most important men of his time, don't forget that dear, and your poor dear mother [*dabs eyes with handkerchief*] was received everywhere. Everywhere!

JANE

That was her life.

AUNT GEORGIANA

[*Rattling on*]

Think of you nursing your mother all these years.

No girlhood pleasures. Never mind, a season at Palm Beach with us will fix all that. You'll fascinate dear on account of being a little mysterious and different. Oh it's so necessary to be different nowadays.

JANE

If one could only find out what it was necessary to be nowadays.

AUNT GEORGIANA

My dear, you mustn't say things people can't understand. . . . But we shouldn't be talking like this with your poor dear mother still in the house. And Lillian will be such a help to you. She ought to be here now. She was so looking forward to being bridesmaid at Maude Stirling's wedding and now she can't because we are all in mourning. [*Dabs at her eyes.*] My dear I think I'm going to have a nervous breakdown.

JOHN

[*Comes out of the parlor*]
Oh Miss Jane de flowers is so strong smellin' it's lake a giarden in de country in dere.

JANE

Has Mr. Tom been here this afternoon?

JOHN

Yes'um. Ah sade as you wan't down an he sade he'd be right back.

AUNT GEORGIANA

[*Suspiciously*]

You see a good deal of that young man, don't you dear? You know I never did think much of the Burns part of the connection.

[*In a lowered voice*]

Old Tom Burns was a plumber. Fortunately the fact is not generally known. What business is the young man in? I hear he's very erratic. I never understand how your poor dear mother allowed you to play together when you were children. Very unwise. Very unwise. . . . [*Goes to parlor curtains, parts them and looks in. She is heard saying:*] Oh they do smell sweet.

[*As the curtains fall together behind her stout figure.*]

JOHN

Ah guess there's lots o' folks comin' to the funeral, Miss Jane.

'Scuse me, Miss Jane, was you ever saved? You muss pardon me, Miss, ah'm powerful wrought up today. . . . Ah sure ware fond o' de Missus.

JANE

[*With a wan smile*]
What do you mean?

JOHN

You see ah done right smart preachin' in ma time.

AUNT GEORGIANA

[*Waltzes out of the parlor, her head bowed and her handkerchief to her eyes*]

Oh Jane she's so beautiful, so white, like a lily. Deary you ought to cry, it'll do you good. Well, it's a consolation that we have always been such an united family. . . . You'll receive the people Jane. They'll begin coming soon. On the mantelpiece I left you a list of those who sent flowers. The large wreaths are marked with a cross. John, get me that carriage robe. There's always so much dust on the seat of the car.

[JOHN *takes the robe out of the seat under the hat-rack and opens the front door. Warm light streams into the darkened house.*]

JANE

I wish I could go with you.

AUNT GEORGIANA

My dear you couldn't leave the house. Anyway I'll be back in half an hour with the minister.

[JOHN *is closing the door after having escorted her out to the car.*]

JANE

No leave it open a minute. [*Breathing deep.*] Tell me about when you first got religion, John.

JOHN

[*Eagerly*]

It was down home 'bout coanshuckin' time. Ah'd been seekin' for three days an three nights without havin' drunk or et, out in de fields an de woods. Ah war sore strucken wid wantin' to change ma life, to give up bein' no account an a sinner, an 'bount sundown ah seen death.

Ah seen death ridin' on a white horse in de woods.

[JANE *looks at him with sudden terror.*]

JOHN

Tell me Missy . . . has you seen him too?

[JANE *does not answer. Suddenly she smiles and waves her hand.* TOM *rushes in, his hat in his hand. Puts his arm round her awkwardly and kisses her. Drops the hat, which* JOHN *picks up and puts carefully on the rack.*]

JANE

I've been having the door open. I suppose I'd better close it.

[JOHN *closes the door and goes out.*]

TOM

[*Breathlessly*]
When will people start coming?

JANE

Any minute now.

TOM

Why wouldn't you let me see you awhile ago?

JANE

I wanted time to think. Tom, you always carry me away into the future. I wanted to think of the past.

TOM

There isn't any past. But you are coming with me now aren't you? Before all these aunts and uncles that waddle like buzzards round the dead get hold of you. It's our one chance. If we wait we won't have the courage. And we'll be like them. [*They are silent. The doorbell rings.*] Here they come. It's between me and the funeral parade. [JOHN *opens the door.*]

COUSIN AMELIA BURNS

[*Walks in to a shuffling fragment of a march. A little woman like a shriveled doll, with a tiny black*

toque perched on top of an obvious red wig. She runs up to JANE *and kisses her slowly on both cheeks*]

Oh Cousin Jane these are painful moments! [*In a shrill piping whisper.*] You know I'm your cousin Amelia Burns. I thought I'd come early so that we could have a good cry together. . . .

JANE

Of course.

COUSIN AMELIA BURNS

Jane dear, lead me to the mortal remains of my friend.

JANE

[*Leading her to curtains*]
In there, Cousin Amelia.

COUSIN AMELIA BURNS

[*As she goes through curtains*]
Oh how sweet the flowers smell.
[*Bell rings.* JOHN *opens door.*]

JANE

I can't meet anyone now. I'll go cry with Cousin Amelia.
[*Goes through curtains.*]
[COUSIN FRANK WILMOT *comes hopping in, a well-*

preserved old man with sideburns, hands his silk hat to JOHN and walks solemnly over to TOM.]

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

[*Holding out his hand*]
Well young man, where do you fit into the family connection?

TOM

[*Looks at him dazed a second*]
Oh I beg your pardon, my father's name was Burns.

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

That's what I said to myself the moment I entered the house. That boy's a Burns. He has the nose. These are painful moments my boy. . . . And what is your exact relationship may I ask?

TOM

I don't think I know.

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

[*Sternly*]
It is these painful moments that draw families together, my boy. You should not neglect your family history . . . our family history, for we are

certainly related. . . . After his flag a gentleman's greatest pride is in his family.

[*The* NURSE *comes downstairs starched to her very ears*]

TOM

Miss Sauers, let me introduce . . .

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

Your cousin, Frank Wilmot, my boy.

[TOM *retreats upstairs and sits on the top step, his head buried dejectedly in his hands.*]

NURSE

How do you do?

[*They nod, caught in the web of a chirpy and decorous dance.*]

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

Might I er . . . view the remains?

NURSE

Right in the parlor, sir.

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

Has Mrs. Burns come yet? I thought I saw her get off the car. Poor demented creature. Frightful a red wig at her age! Several years older

than I too. And such bad taste at a funeral don't you think so, Miss Sauers? But after all these painful moments do draw families together. . . .

NURSE

[*Steering him towards parlor*]

Oh Mr. Wilmot you must see her before the crush comes. So beautiful. Think of it, in her wedding dress that had been kept all these years. In her will she said she wanted to be buried in it.

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

[*In an eager whisper*]

And . . . er . . . what about the will?

[*The curtains close behind them.*]

[JOHN *opens for* AUNT MARIANNA *and* UNCLE WILLIAM CARROLL *who stamp in quarrelling.*]

UNCLE WILLIAM

But I can't my dear. I must get to New York tonight, that's all there is about it. You know how long these things take.

AUNT MARIANNA

[*At same time.*]

I think it's perfectly outrageous. She was your brother's wife. You must wait to go to the cemetery.

Well do just as you like. None of my business. I wasn't even related to her.

[*As* JANE *comes out through curtains they suddenly assume solemn expressions.* AUNT MARIANNA *is the exact replica of* AUNT GEORGIANA, *only dark instead of blond.* UNCLE WILLIAM *is cleanshaven, heavy-jowled, spreading so to a paunch that the buttons of the double-breasted vest seem ready to pop from under the looped watchchain. The exact replica of other uncles to come.*]

AUNT MARIANNA and UNCLE WILLIAM

[*Together*]
My poor dear Jane!

JANE

Hello Uncle William. . . . How well you are looking Aunt Marianna.

UNCLE WILLIAM

It's all for the best, dear; don't forget that.

AUNT MARIANNA

The Lord giveth and taketh away. . . . [*They enfold her alternately in ample embraces.*] Everything's for the best in this world dear.

COUSIN AMELIA BURNS

[*Who has followed* JANE *out of the inner room*]
How lovely the purple orchids are with the lilies. Very suitable. Of course for Ruth it would not have been quite right. She had only white flowers. The purest white flowers.

AUNT MARIANNA

Why Cousin Amelia Burns, I haven't seen you since the day. . . . Oh when was it?

COUSIN AMELIA BURNS

At Aunt Josephine's funeral. Such painful memories. . . .

AUNT MARIANNA

[*Going through the curtains*]
Oh how sweet the flowers smell.

[JOHN *stands at the door opening and shutting as new people keep coming.* UNCLE AMOS, *exactly like* UNCLE WILLIAM, followed by two sons with *Arrow Collar faces. Then two dowdy old ladies. People stand in small whispering groups in the hall which is very dim except for the moments when the door is open. Whenever they move they dance to creaky bonedry tunes of family mourning.*]

UNCLE AMOS

[*Detaches himself from the crowd with* JANE *near the foot of the stairs*]

Jane dear, your aunt regretted so not to be able to come. You understand don't you? Her sciatica.

JANE

[*Going upstairs*]

Of course.

[*They go out front door.*]

[*Upstairs* TOM *jumps to his feet and catches* JANE *by her two hands.*]

TOM

What about it?

JANE

How can I decide?

TOM

Is it such a difficult choice?

JANE

How can I know? Can't you understand I want quiet?

[*Goes into bedroom, leaving the door open.*]

[TOM *stands leaning over the rail looking down at the people below. At foot of stairs first young*

male cousin is talking to second young male cousin.]

FIRST COUSIN

I just had to come. Mother insisted.

SECOND COUSIN

I didn't know Jane was so good-looking.

FIRST COUSIN

Black's always becoming. They say she's been hitting it up quite some since she left college.

SECOND COUSIN

Who?

FIRST COUSIN

Jane. . . . Gee the minister sure is late.

SECOND COUSIN

Probably had a blowout.

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

[*Drawing near eagerly*]
Did you say Mr. Brickstone had had a blowout?

FIRST COUSIN

Just a guess. . . . Look at that red hair!

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

It's a wig. That's poor Cousin Amelia.

FIRST COUSIN

[*Whispering to his friend*]
Did you hear the story of Fifi Southwark's wig in The Purple Daisy?

SECOND COUSIN

That show's in town tonight. . . .
[*They go off whispering into a corner.* COUSIN FRANK WILMOT *joins another group.*]

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

I'm afraid Mr. Brickstone must have had a blow-out.
[*Upstairs, the bedroom door goes light as if the shutters had been suddenly thrown open on an invisible window.*]

TOM

You are letting in the light!

JANE

I couldn't help it.
[JANE *comes to the door and they remain there talking silhouetted against the patch of brilliance.*]

NURSE

I thought we could be letting them view the body.

[*Grand jazzed funeral march of relatives into the parlor where the drawn back curtains reveal the coffin.*]

JANE

Tom I'm so tired of all this.

TOM

Come away from it.

JANE

Do you remember at the farm in summer? We can never be happier than we were then.

TOM

Of course we can if we want to be.

JANE

I'm trying to think. I'm trying to think.

Why isn't the world like we thought it was? We thought it was a neat checkerboard of good and evil where love and hate moved the white pawns and the black and the white were sure to win and everything was providential.

TOM

It's more like a jungle where you can't tell the stars from the lightning bugs.

JANE

But if it were so easy wouldn't people have tried? Look at Cousin Amelia, just a red wig and tears, didn't she want to live?

[*Back in the parlor the relatives with bowed heads are walking in a ring around the coffin.*]

TOM

Nobody has ever tried anything. We could enchant all your family sniveling round your mother's coffin into guinea pigs if we really wanted to. We could fly out of the window to the top of Mount Ararat. People want so little.

JANE

Then what use is it?

TOM

Recklessness.

JANE

There has never been a woman reckless.

TOM

I love you, Jane.

[*He tries to kiss her.* JANE *forces away from him and starts slowly downstairs.*]

[TOM *follows her dejectedly and is accosted by* COUSIN FRANK WILMOT *at the foot of the stairs.*]

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

Very strange is it not that Mr. Brickstone has not come?

TOM

I didn't know.

COUSIN FRANK WILMOT

Very strange indeed. D'you know, young man, you remind me so of my nephew, John Wilmot, a lad with great promise of success——I remember so well his burial in Beechlawn cemetery. A very sad occasion. The ladies were prostrated . . . in a downpour of rain too. And three of the little group that followed his last remains to the grave, contracted pneumonia. I nearly caught my death that day.

OLD LADY

[*To* AUNT MARIANNA]
Did you see Cousin Amelia.

AUNT MARIANNA

Very strange the minister does not come.

OLD LADY

But don't you think it's dreadful to come that way to a funeral. . . . Such lack of respect! Everybody knows it's a wig.

AUNT MARIANNA

Poor dear Cousin Amelia. She hasn't been quite herself since her daughter Ruth was taken.

OLD LADY

I don't see that that is any excuse.

THE NURSE

At last I hear them.

[JOHN *opens the door. Everybody stops talking. People shuffle their feet respectfully.* MR. BRICKSTONE, *a round pink-checked little man with an expression of demure sympathy foxtrots in followed by* AUNT GEORGIANA *waltzing. He bows and removes his kid gloves.* JOHN *helps him off with his coat. People meanwhile form up about the coffin.* TOM *and* JANE *are whispering together at the foot of the stairs.*]

TOM

You seem to be further from me every minute. There's something about this house, these people, the choking smell of the flowers . . .

JANE

I'm made the same as they are, Tom.

TOM

It's between this shuttered house and the shining broad world and you and me Jane. We could throw ourselves out into the spinning universe, we could run with old man Orion across the night sky, we could rock in Cassiopoeia's chair. I'll pour you out champagne punch with the Dipper, Jane.

JANE

[*Cries out suddenly*]
Oh I feel so cold and frozen. I don't care about anything.

TOM

I'll thaw you out like the sun. It's between this shuttered house and you and me.

AUNT GEORGIANA

[*With difficulty keeping her voice down*]
Young man you leave this house. At such a time.

. . . I never heard of such. . . . Leave this house at once without scandal or I'll have you put out.

JANE

[*In a tired voice*]
Please Aunt Georgiana, this is my business.

AUNT GEORGIANA

They are waiting for you. Remember your dead mother.

[*She throws an arm around her and pushes her into the parlor. In the parlor the lights have been turned on. The minister stands at the head of the coffin, his book in his hand.* TOM, *his eyes to the ground, is following into the parlor when* AUNT GEORGIANA *pulls the curtains together in his face.*]

[JOHN, *who has watched the whole scene intently from his post by the door runs over to* TOM *and puts a hand on his shoulder.*]

JOHN

Mr. Tom, Mr. Tom, lemme talk to ye a minute.

TOM

Go ahead, John.

[*From the parlor come the indistinguishable murmur of the minister reading the service for the dead*]

Oh Mr. Tom all this sure do make me think o' de burying o' ma mudder down home. Ah'd been awful low down befoa. Done much worse than you Mr. Tom makin' love to Miss Jane like you're doin'.

TOM

I wonder if it's nothing but that. . . .

JOHN

It war a day like ah'd never seen before, so blue de sky was, and de leaves o' de trees war green an dancin' in the wind dat smelt o' laurel swamps all bloomin'. An there war de preacher wid his book an the sexton who war a uncle o' mine a-diggin' at de grave.

TOM

Not like this house here, shuttered against the sun and wind.

JOHN

[*His voice becomes chanting and loud*]

An up in de locust tree over our head a maukin' bird was singin', singin', comin' in at ma ears and goin' through ma body an warmin' it like whisky might, only sweeter and warmer. An ah seemed to feel all de sins ah'd done, wit drinkin' whisky an' girls an everythin' all come out black like ma skin

tied up roun me, an dat sweet singin' lake angels pushin' em out o' me. An ah seemed to year a voice singin' in de maukin'; Dat's why you's black, John Lincoln. You go git saved, John Lincoln, count o' yer sins. Ah den ah began seekin'. . . .

TOM

And are you happy now, John?

JOHN

Happy, Mr. Tom, wid de life everlastin' flowin' through me like de song o' de maukin'! When a man's found his road to foller dey ain't no way for him 'xepen he follers it. And to turn back Mr. Tom, is gnashin' o' teeth an a sound o' wailin' in ye years.

TOM

Suppose instead of seeking for heaven we sought for the earth?

JOHN

Ain't nauthin' but filth an' wickedness. Ain't no good in de earth, Mr. Tom.

TOM

Suppose you sought even for filth and wickedness?

JOHN

Gawd Gawd if de holy one would only send me a sign like to de prophets in de olden time.

[*The bell rings. Trembling with excitement* JOHN *goes over to the door. The undertaker's man leans in and asks in a heavy whisper:* Is they ready yet?]

JOHN

[*Tiptoes over to the curtains and peeps through*]

Preacher is juss windin' up.

[*Four undertaker's men in black come in, leaving the front door open so that the hall is flooded with scarlet-tinged light.*]

TALL UNDERTAKER

The casket first, Bill, the casket first.

HEAD UNDERTAKER

[*Chanting officiously*]

Careful with the flowers, men. Careful with the flowers.

[*The curtains are opened.*]

[MR. BRICKSTONE *comes skipping out.*]

HEAD UNDERTAKER

Good day Mr. Brickstone, how do you do?

MR. BRICKSTONE

Nicely Mr. Elkins. . . . How are you?

After all, my dear Mrs. Riverson, however deep your grief, however profound your bereavement you cannot but admit in the end that everything from the larger angle, is for the best.

AUNT GEORGIANA

Very true, Mr. Brickstone. . . . Jane, that young man is still here. [*Cautiously.*] You must go right out to the carriage dear. I'll attend to him. Now that your dear mother has gone you must let me attend to these things. I'll speak to him. The idea!

JANE

Please Aunty you don't understand.

AUNT GEORGIANA

But at least he must go away for the present. At such a time! It's sacrilegious!

JANE

See that people get into the carriages, please. I'll run up and put my hat on.

[JANE *runs upstairs.*]

[TOM *has followed* JANE *upstairs. They stand looking down over the banisters out of the shadow of the upper hall. The coffin is carried out,*

then the wreaths and the pall and the trestles on which it stood.]

TOM

Let them bury our lives too . . . our lives up to this minute.

JANE

If I could only be sure that there would be no ghosts walking.

JOHN

Ah's gwine preach. Ah feel it in ma bones that ah's gwine preach. [*Suddenly cries aloud in a chanting voice.*]

And lo in de glory o' sundown while de earthly ashes is carted away to be graveyard, de soul rises up on de smell o' de hot house flowers into everlasting light. Doan forget dat bretheren.

UNCLE WILLIAM

[*Rushes up to him*]

What's the matter? My good man, this is not time. . . . A solemn occasion like this!

AUNT GEORGIANA

I think the carriages are ready.

[*She herds people towards the door.*]

JOHN

[*Breaks away from* UNCLE WILLIAM, *climbs half way up the stairs and leans from there as if from a pulpit*]

Listen to me bretheren for de finger o' de Lawd is dilatin' within me. . . .

UNCLE WILLIAM

[*From below*]

Look here my man!

AUNT GEORGIANA

[*Breathless*]

The carriages are ready. Please get into the carriages.

TOM

[*Roaring with laughter*]

Go to it, John.

[JANE *puts her hand over his mouth.*]

JOHN

In dis world dey's many folks thinks dey's alive as ain't alive. Dey's alive accordin' to de whited sepulchers o' de world and dead accordin' to de sperits o' de prophets. It's dem dey ought to cart away in hearses, bretheren! It's dem dat's felt tingle within em de breath o' de Lawd, like a bird, like a

maukin in de woods, a song full o' warm honey, and all de same ain't follered de call, but has carried deir sperits in a hearse at de end o' de parade of de pomp o' de world. Hit's dem dat's dade! Hit's dem dat's dade!

AUNT GEORGIANA

Stop him, for heaven's sake stop him! [*To* COUSIN AMELIA *who stands staring at* JOHN *with terrified horror.*] The carriages are ready Cousin Amelia. [*Pulling her by the arm.*] Come with me.
[*They hurry out.*]

TOM

[*To* JANE]
They are going to forget us. See if they don't.

UNCLE WILLIAM

Why don't you do something to stop him?

JOHN

An why am ah tellin' ye all dis? Cause ah's saved. Ah's saved. Ah's seen death a-ridin' on a white horse in de woods. Ah's saved!

UNCLE WILLIAM

[*Grabs him and pushes him downstairs*]
Now will you shut up?

[*He stands over* JOHN, *his fists clenched.*]
[*He goes out.*]
[JOHN *sits meekly on the bottom step, with his head between his hands, shaking all over.*]
[TOM *and* JANE *run down the stairs and to the front door hand in hand.*]

TOM

We're safe! There go the carriages.

JANE

John scared them away.

TOM

You can still catch up to them. It's between me and the funeral, Jane.

JANE

It's your doing, John. Get up and give us your blessing.

JOHN

[*Getting shakily to his feet*]
Ah kin see it burnin' in yer eyes. May it all be singin' to ye and when ye've found ye'll know cause ye'll see death.

JANE

Now we are really 'seekin.' Where shall we go Tom?

TOM

Does it matter?

[*They go out their arms round each other's shoulders.*]

JOHN

Ye'll see death lak ah seen death a-ridin' a white horse in de woods.

[*Between the scenes the music playing loud "When That Midnight Choochoo Leaves for Alabam," drains into the sound of a hurdygurdy playing "I'se Been Workin' On de Railroad," that is gradually drowned out again by the thump thump of the forced draught of a locomotive.*]

SCENE IV

Black night. The drop shows tracks and telegraph poles, in the greenish cone of a searchlight. On one side the arm of a wrecking crane. Everything is toppling, confused, jagged. From off stage comes the continuous thump thump of a locomotive. Men cross the stage occasionally with lanterns and

shovels. Now and then everything is livid with the violent green glare of oxi-acetylene torches.

TOM

We'll be here for a long time, Jane. The track seems to be all torn up ahead of us.

JANE

Were there many killed?

TOM

I don't know, nobody seems to know.

JANE

It's miserable this delay. I'm so tired of this trip. We've been here two hours already.

TOM

After all we might as well be here as anywhere.

JANE

You are so shiftless, Tom.

TOM

We shift a good deal it seems to me.

JANE

From place to place. Oh Tom, I'm very miserable tonight. We are so dependent on all these

things, three meals a day and money in the bank and train schedules and when the boy calls for the laundry. When we get to Chicago we'll live differently.

TOM

Shall we?

JANE

I want to do so much.

TOM

We only have twenty-four hours a day, sixty minutes in an hour, sixty. . . .

JANE

Oh you know what I mean.

TOM

Any girl as lovely as you are can do things with life, with other people's lives.

JANE

What was that?

TOM

Some woman shrieked.

JANE

Oh I wonder if there are many people hurt in that train.

Isn't it frightening the thought of all these trains? Machines spinning, weaving steel webs, cold steel splinters sharp as razors, and nothing but our poor bare hands to lay hold of that, our naked bodies to fight all that, to conquer all that.

You told me you would help me, that we'd clamber out of this humdrum slave existence.

TOM

I know, I know.

JANE

All you've done is tell me how beautiful I am.

TOM

I couldn't think of anything else. I can't now.

JANE

You've made a padded quilt of loving me to roll up and go to sleep in.

TOM

We have been happy. We ought to have children.

JANE

I don't want children. I want to be myself.

TOM

You have never regretted.

JANE

I have never regretted anything. Oh I hate this delay.

TOM

If it hadn't been for you.

JANE

What would you have done?

TOM

I'd have started sooner.

JANE

If it had been our train wrecked instead of the train ahead, what chance would you have had to start?

TOM

When we get to Chicago it will be different. Our life will begin from tomorrow.

JANE

If we'd been in the train ahead we would never have got to Chicago.

TOM

You mean you don't love me any more?
[*A* FAT MAN *in bathrobe and slippers comes in.*]

FAT MAN

Got a match, friend? [*Lights a cigar.*] What is all the noise. Is this a station?

TOM

Train ahead's wrecked.

FAT MAN

Wrecked? Then we're late.

TOM

Hours late.

FAT MAN

I'll miss my connections in Chicago. That's hell to pay.

TOM

Why's that?

FAT MAN

Young man, don't you appreciate the value of time? Every hour I'm late in Milwaukee will mean a thousand dollars to me more or less. I'll be ruined if we don't get in before noon. I stand to lose eight hundred thousand dollars through the carelessness of a miserable trackwalker.

JANE

Other people have lost more than that.

FAT MAN

What?

JANE

Their lives, people they loved.

FAT MAN

Love is cheap. You can buy it anywhere. Lives are cheap. It's money that's dear. You have to work days and sit up nights thinking how to make money.

TOM

Here's the porter. Perhaps he can tell us how late we'll be.

FAT MAN

Hey, Billy, why don't we move on?

COLORED PORTER

[*Comes in trembling.*]
Lawse they's cut up somethin' turrible.

FAT MAN

How late'll we be in Chicago? Is there anywhere I can send a telegram?

PORTER

They's in a allsteel car that telescoped. They's most of 'em dade in there. An those that ain't is groanin'. You can hear 'em from here.

FAT MAN

[*Pulling at* TOM's *arm.*]
Let's go up and take a look at it. [*They go off left.*]

PORTER

Don't you go, Missy. You'll not forgit it to yer dyin' day. Sights like that ain't for the likes of you.

JANE

Is there anything I could do, do you think?

PORTER

Ain't nothing you kin do, Missy. They's doctors an nurses and the wreckers are gittin' 'em out. Don't

you see they's burnin' through the steel girders, like fireworks?

JANE

It's miserable waiting like this. The sky is so black; I can't see any stars.

PORTER

They's a friend o' mine pohter on that train an' I ain't seen him. I doan know if he's dade or alive.

JANE

How did it happen?

PORTER

Dunno; juss happened I guess, miss. Look here's a new gang to help the wreckers.

[*A group of men with picks and shovels and lanterns come in right.*]

JAKE

Whatfor they wake us up. No light yet.

BILL

Ain't right. This ain't our shift.

BUD

Maybe they pay us overtime. It's a wreck.

JAKE

Gee look at the swell dame.

BILL

Number 81's derailed. Listen to the poor devils scream.

JAKE

There'll be women in their nightshirts running down the track.

[*The gang goes off left.*]

PORTER

They'll have the track cleared in a jiffy now.

[THE MAN IN BLACK OVERALLS *came in with the workmen. He stands with his arms crossed beside* JANE *and the porter. He has a visored cap pulled down over his gaunt brows. He is the* FAMILY PRACTITIONER *in a new disguise.*]

MAN IN BLACK OVERALLS

Won't do much good to some of 'em.

PORTER

What do you mean?

MAN IN BLACK OVERALLS

Mighty cozy in them sleeping cars ain't it? An' when they lay there cuddled warm in the blankets

sleeping and expectin' to wake up safe in Chicago and begin livin' their lives again, or wake mebbe listening to the wheels clatter over crossin's and the engine tootin' now an' then an' thinking 'bout how tomorrow they'd start makin' a million dollars or make somebody fall in love with 'em or buy their kids toys. . . . Funny I call it.

PORTER

Whatye laughin' about, boss? Ain't no time to laugh.

[*He edges away and off left.*]

MAN IN BLACK OVERALLS

Funny I call it.

[JANE *is staring at him fixedly*]

JANE

Who are you?

MAN IN BLACK OVERALLS

Juss one o' the wreckin' gang.

JANE

Why are you standing here?

MAN IN BLACK OVERALLS

I've done my work lady. . . . Glad you wasn't on number 81 ain't you lady?

JANE

I've seen your face before.

MAN IN BLACK OVERALLS

Have you now, lady? My name's Smith; must have been a cousin o' mine you saw, lady. We're everywhere. [*Takes a step towards her. She recoils.*] Ha they're bringin' 'em now. [*Muffled drumbeat. Men carrying a stretcher, on it something covered by a blanket, cross from left to right.*] He won't buy no more lower berth tickets for two. Funny I call it. He was a traveling man an' every Saturday night he went out of Buffalo in a lower berth with a creamfaced blonde. He had a wife an' kids in Chicago, an' every mornin' when he left her to go home alone he told her how he'd forget his wife an' kids and come an' live with her at Niagara Falls an' never leave her no more.

[*Another stretcher.*]

Here she is. She was a good church-goin' gal, an' when she laid awake beside him listening to the wheels over the rails she used to look at the lights flash at crossin's an' pray to God to give him to her for keeps. He always had boils on his neck an' had a pot belly, but she loved him. A wicked pair of ankles she could flash when she wanted to; warn't a man alive could see her an' not want to run his hands through her yaller hair.

[*Another stretcher.*]

He was in the drawin' room this guy was. Goin' West to corner wheat. A million dollars' worth of stock in his travelin' bag an' a detective dressed up like a valet to protect him. Always said to himself evenin's when he sat alone in his silk pyjamas, lettin' the detective mix a bit of old Bourbon in a highball to make him sleep, that if he could make five million more he'd lay off and look round the world a bit. Heavy ain't he?

[*Another stretcher.*]

This little one was a kid goin' to school, dreamy round the eyes, always wanted to run away and walk the tracks an' be a bum an' see the country from Eastport to San Diego, and crosswise up the Mississippi River to Washington State, so's he could know what to think about things.

[*Another stretcher.*]

And this girl was married an' loved her husband and used to say next year we'll have money enough to have a baby. She worked in a department store and was mostly too tired to think, but off days when it was rainy an' there warn't many folks shopping she'd stand lookin' across the ribbon counter an' say to herself how she was tired o' being a slave and wanted to go home to the farm an' have a baby. All the same these folks is lady, they walked about eve-

nin's after supper an' looked at the moon an' wished an' thought how tomorrow . . .

TOM

[*Comes in following a man with a lantern, one of the construction gang.*]

I guess it's because my hands are too white and soft.

MAN WITH LANTERN

They won't take long to git hard.

TOM

Do you like the life?

MAN WITH LANTERN

Don't have much time to know whether I like it or not we work so damn hard.

TOM

Could I get a job with you fellers?

MAN WITH LANTERN

I guess the foreman'd sign you up all right. The gang's shorthanded. Don't you do it though; a guy like you kin make more workin' in an office I can tell ye. Got a union card?

JANE

Tom, come here. [*The man in black overalls has slouched off.*] Tom, I'm frightened.

TOM

How would it be to stop and work here with these people? Suppose I don't go on to Chicago at all.

JANE

I'm frightened I tell you.

TOM

Is it all these dead people they carried by on stretchers?

JANE

Didn't you see the man with the face too white standing beside me?

TOM

Why dear, your hand's trembling. It's just a smashup, the sort of thing that happens every day. Do pull yourself together. You mustn't have nerves like this.

JANE

You look after your own nerves. I can take care of mine.

FAT MAN

[*Coming in again from l.*]

Horrible horrible. They'll feel this on the street. The rotten luck of having this happen away from a station. If I could only telegraph my brokers. You'd think they'd have radio tickers on these trains. Sure pay enough to get a few conveniences. Don't you think so, sir? I could clean up something I can tell you five minutes after the market opens. There's a poor woman there had her legs cut off.

PORTER

[*Comes in from the same direction.*]

Boss, I jus' talked to de engineer. He say'd how we'd be backin' up soon cause they'll have a track clear in a few minutes.

FAT MAN

I'll make my connections, then. I'll be a millionaire tomorrow if this luck keeps up. Get me a telegraph blank.

PORTER

All right, boss.

[FAT MAN *disappears.*]

FAT MAN

Well, good night, folks. I guess I'll go back to bed. That's the way it is now, isn't it? Some fellers' downs are other fellers' ups.

[*The searchlight is turned off. The stage is dark, save for a red glow from the crane.*]

TOM

What'll he do when he's a millionaire?

JANE

Sit in smoking cars and tell stories about when he was poor.

TOM

I could get to be a millionaire if you wanted me to.

JANE

You're wrong, Tom. You can't do even that two by two. The only thing that can be done two by two is come out of the ark. We've done that. Now we are on our own.

TOM

I left you alone for a minute and when I came back I found you trembling.

JANE

Never mind, I can face even that alone. Tom, we can't be together any more.

TOM

What else can we do but be together? I love you, Jane.

JANE

Love is like filling your hands with water at a spring when you're thirsty . . . you put your lips down to drink and it's gone. You can't pack it away in mothballs like a dress suit to wear on great occasions.

TOM

But ever since that day I've lived just for you; honestly, I'm not proud of it or ashamed of it.

JANE

You said you'd stay and work here.

TOM

I was just joking. I don't know where this is. After we get to Chicago . . .

JANE

There's no after, there's no tomorrow. Do you think I would have come with you that day that mother was buried if I hadn't had to?

It's the same now. I will live now.

Tomorrow there's only death suffocating me like a blanket. That wasn't what we meant when we made the alliance under the lilac bush in the back yard. Have you forgotten that and how the moon would mean act not dream to you?

TOM

Can't you see you're hurting me?

JANE

I want to hurt you. Can't you see that something has happened, that I am defying something? You're soft, Tom, you're soft.

TOM

All right. Go along. I'll never see you again. If it hadn't been for you, I'd have given up all this sort of thing long ago. I wouldn't have slaved all night writing damn lies in a stinking office if I hadn't wanted you to be happy, to be comfortable, not to find the shock of the world too sudden and too hard.

All right. I'll never see you again.

Now that you feel you are on your own feet you throw me over.

I'll do what I've always wanted to do now. Everything I've been afraid to do on account of you. I'll see the world. I'll live every sort of life. I'll climb the Andes and be a millionaire in a marble and gilt apartment on Park Avenue and sail in a junk on the Yellow Sea. I'm free of you now. Ever since I was a kid I've been dizzy with love of you. Now I'll see clear.

[*The engine toots twice and the bell starts ringing.*]

PORTER

[*Runs in calling out*]

All aboard. Chicago express pullin' out. [*Shouts at* TOM] Run for it, boss.

[*Train jerks slowly back with clank of couplings. There is a tremendous thumping and puffing of the engine and the train stops again.* TOM *stands with his arms folded.*]

PORTER

Trains' goin', Missy.

JANE

Tom, look at me. Tom, never forget, when you really need me.

[*Her voice is drowned in the puffing of the engine.*

She runs off. The stage is dark. The engine bell goes off into distance. There is a long whistle. Then another far away. Where TOM *stands there is a faint glow from where the wreckers are working, left. The man with the lantern lifts it to look in* TOM'S *face.*]

MAN WITH LANTERN

Ye missed yer train.

TOM

It wasn't my train.

MAN WITH LANTERN

But you were with the swell dame wasn't ye?

TOM

She threw me over.

[*Same gang comes back across the stage. They gather round* TOM.]

MAN WITH LANTERN

Look, fellers, here's a guy got left.

JAKE

How's that? Is he hurt?

MAN WITH LANTERN

Hell no, ain't that.

BILL

Tough luck, buddy. How did ye get left?

MAN WITH LANTERN

His woman throwed him over.

BUD

Ain't that the damndest? Let his girl go on the train an' him left behind.
[*They all laugh.*]

MAN WITH LANTERN

And what do ye propose to do now?

JAKE

Did she go off with your jack too?

TOM

Get a job workin' on the railroad I guess.

BILL

His hands is too soft.

JAKE

He ain't got the muscle for it. This ain't no white collar job.

MAN WITH LANTERN

Shut yer face, Jake, he'll do all right.

BUD

But a guy who'd let a skirt put that over on him ain't got no sense to come in when it rains. [*They laugh.*] I'd have socked her one. With his jack in his suitcase an' all!

BILL

Why didn't ye run after it instead of standin' here dazed like?

MAN WITH LANTERN

You might hop the milk train and get in tomorrow mornin'. You might find her an get yer stuff back at any rate.

TOM

I'm going to take a job here. Let her go. I haven't any stuff. I'm on my own.

MAN WITH LANTERN

Good riddence, eh?

TOM

Yes.

[*They go off as the stage is blotted. The music has come to a sharp climax. It crashes silent as the houselights go on.*]

Part Two

Part Two

CHARACTERS

The Girl in the Red Hat
Her Young Man
The Telescope Man
Old Bum
Young Bum
Tom
The Man in the Stovepipe Hat
Newsboys
Tall Young Man With a Cold Cream Face
Short Young Man With a Cold Cream Face
Fat Young Man With a Cold Cream Face
Jane
Baboonfaced Policeman
Gorillafaced Policeman
Orneryfaced Policeman
Mrs. Halloran
Plain Clothes Man
The Man in the Panama Hat
The Æsthetic Dancer, Teadrinkers,
He and She Intellectuals
The Garbage Man
Two Men in Brown Derbies
Four Real Estate Men
The Boy With His Shirt Out
Paraders
The Voice of the Radio

Part Two

SCENE 1

Union Square. New York. Curtains open with the orchestra playing "East Side, West Side." Benches, back of them shadows of lighted buildings. Above against the milky night sky glow yellow and vermilion oblongs of billboards. At the left of the stage a big brass telescope on a tripod. Beside it a shabby old man giving ten cent squints at the moon. Two bums on a bench. Policemen, newsboys, loafers occasionally pass across the stage. A girl in a red hat is looking down into the eyepiece while her young man stands beside her with a patronizing air.

GIRL IN RED HAT

Oooo, it's dreadful.

YOUNG MAN

What is?

GIRL

Why the moon is. It's got pimples. An' I used to think I wanted to live in the moon. Wasn't that silly?

YOUNG MAN

Lemme look. Why I see a honeymoon. Myrtle, it's wonderful.

GIRL

[*Giggling*]
Atlantic City'll suit me better for a honeymoon, Joe.

YOUNG MAN

It's wonderful. It's all shiny and tremblin' like. When you was a kid did you make soap bubbles?

GIRL

I worked all day when I was a kid making celluloid buttons. No room for soap bubbles on Avenue C.

YOUNG MAN

Up home we used to blow soap bubbles washday.

TELESCOPE MAN

Well now yous knows what the moon looks like.

YOUNG MAN

I didn't think it'd be all trembling like all over.

TELESCOPE MAN

Now folks, lemme explain to ye a few o' the more salient facts about this here satilite of the earth as ye might say. The mean distance of the moon from the earth is 207,200 geographical miles. The moon shines not by its own light like an arclight, as you may think, but mirrors the light of the sun.

GIRL

D'you mean that when we look at the moon it's really the world we see like in a lookin' glass?

TELESCOPE MAN

[*Ignoring her*]

The moon's diameter is 1,816 miles, about one fourth of that of the earth, her material contents 1/54 those of the earth. The moon has no perceptible flattening, but an extremely slight prolongation on the side towards the earth estimated theoretically. The rotation of the moon upon its axis is completed in exactly the same time in which it revolves round the earth and this is probably the case with all other secondary planets.

[*The young man has been whispering to the girl. She suddenly breaks away from him half giggling, half angry.*]

GIRL

Say you want the moon an' everythin' all at once. [*She flounces off. He follows.*]

YOUNG MAN

Honest, Myrtle . . .

[TOM *has come in and has been looking up the brass outside of the telescope at the moon. He is ragged, browner, leaner, older than before, wears a checked cap far down over his eyes, has a bum's shuffling walk.*]

TELESCOPE MAN

Take a look at the marvels of the moon, ten cents young feller. See the craters, mountains, dried out seas.

TOM

I haven't got a nickel.

TELESCOPE MAN

Down on yer uppers?

TOM

Flat.

TELESCOPE MAN

Hungry? [TOM *nods. He looks at him angrily a minute and then says in an undertone:*] Pike

along over to that lunchroom, first one on the left below Fourteenth on Sixth Avenue an' ask for George. Tell him I sent you. He'll give you some stale biscuit or somethin'.

TOM

I guess I will.
[*Goes off.*]

TELESCOPE MAN

[*To a young bum and an old bum on the bench*]
Two jitneys to see the marvels of the moon.
[*They all laugh.*]

YOUNG BUM

Ain't folks suckers. Payin' money to look at the moon. It's the only thing in this goddam town ye get for nauthin'.

OLD BUM

'Bout all I've had in the way of a piece of change, since Christ was a corporal, 's the moon.

YOUNG BUM

Bad town, ain't it?

OLD BUM

Fine town once yous on the inside. Nobody don't work here.

YOUNG BUM

I ain't seen a guy in work clothes since I landed here.

Kerist I wish I had the price of a steak. I'm sick of this life. I'm goin' to get some jack an' go home an' plant myself among the weeds.

Onct I worked in a restaurant in Seattle. Treated us swell, gave us all steak every night, good rare juicy steak every night for supper.

[*The* MAN IN THE STOVEPIPE HAT, dressed in a *frock coat, yellow gloves, yellow spats, as elegant as a ringmaster, has come in while the young bum is raving about steak. He is the same as the* FAMILY PRACTITIONER *and the* MAN IN BLACK OVERALLS.]

TELESCOPE MAN

Ten cents to see the marvels of the moon, see the craters, mountains, dried out seas.

OLD BUM

Say, kid, you're green. Don't you know enough not to talk about eats to a hungry man? You'll have us both crazy if you don't watch out. I've seen 'em go off foamin' mad like with the hydraphoby jes' for talkin' about eats wid a holler belly.

YOUNG BUM

Gee I can't think o' nothin' else.

[*The* MAN IN THE STOVEPIPE HAT *who has been looking at them fixedly sits down on the next bench and dandles his cane between his knees.*]

YOUNG BUM

Kerist look at the dude.

OLD BUM

Say, mister, the kid and me's flat. Been lookin' for work all week. Can't you give us a couple of nickels for a cup of coffee.

MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT

Hungry eh?

YOUNG BUM

[*Stuttering with eagerness*]

Yyyessir huhungry as hehell. You haven't any work you could give us? I'd do anything for a meal, honest I would.

MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT

Anything?

NEWSBOY

[*Running across the stage.*]

There's Janet Gwendolen the actress.

[*Music like for the entrance of the star in musical comedy.* JANE *dressed in white sport clothes comes in with three* YOUNG MEN WITH COLD CREAM FACES *in straw hats who look like chorusmen in the country house scene. They line up and group round her. She does a bit of a dance.*]

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

How beautiful Union Square is at night.

SHORT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

How beautiful Jane looks in Union Square at night.

FAT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

That marvelous arrangement of oblongs.

JANE

Oh isn't it just too beautiful.

TELESCOPE MAN

Fifteen cents to see the marvels of the moon. Take a look at the craters, mountains, and dried out seas.

[TOM *has come in, his coat torn in the back, brushing dirt off his clothes. He catches sight of* JANE *and stands stiff watching her.*]

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Oh let's look at the moon.

SHORT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Let's see the marvels of the moon.

JANE

What's the use of looking at it if we can't strike on it like on a gong and make it ring.

FAT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

What a daring simile.

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

What a musical metaphor.

[*They go off to a flourish like the end of a star number brushing past* TOM *without noticing him. He stands looking after them tottering feebly. At length the* TELESCOPE MAN *goes up to him.*]

TELESCOPE MAN

Did he give you something to eat?

TOM

What?

TELESCOPE MAN

Did you find George?

TOM

No, they threw me out. I tore my coat falling over an ashcan.

[*The* MAN IN THE STOVEPIPE HAT *has been leaning across the* OLD BUM *and whispering.*]

YOUNG BUM

[*Excitedly*]

Buddy, come on over here. Here's a guy offerin' us jobs.

MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT

I want some fellows with nerve.

OLD BUM

Gee she flashed a mean pair of ankles.

TOM

She was my girl once.

OLD BUM

You must be awful hungry. You're gettin' to see things.

YOUNG BUM

She sure was a swell upholstered skirt.

TOM

She brushed by and wouldn't see me.

YOUNG BUM

Them kind won't look at the likes of us.

OLD BUM

All cats are black in a dark alley.

THE MAN WITH STOVEPIPE HAT

[*Getting to his feet*]
There's no time to lose.

OLD BUM

Doan you listen to him, kid.

YOUNG BUM

I'm goin' to take his job I don't care what it is. This ain't no life. I'm goin' to make money an eat proper and have girls. First thing I'm going to get's a rare juicy steak wid onions and potatoes an . . .

OLD BUM

I tell ye not to go with him do ye hear?

TOM

I'll go with him. What's the job? I'll do anything for money. I'll find Jane and make her dizzy with money.

MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT

How's your nerve?

TOM

I've got to have something to eat and some coffee.

YOUNG BUM

I'm comin'. I got to have some jack.

OLD BUM

[*Without moving*]
Listen here, kid, I told ye not to. I'll bust every bone in yer body if I ketch ye after this.

YOUNG BUM

Will ye set us up to a feed first, mister?

MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT

[*Beckons them over to the far side of the stage*]
You'll have something to eat in a moment. First you've got to say you'll do everything we tell you. And if you back out once you're in, by God we'll croak the two of you like cracking peanuts. Will you go in?

YOUNG BUM

How much are we goin' to get?

MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT

If we clean up as we ought to I'll give you a hundred bucks each.

YOUNG BUM

Cripes I'm on.

TOM

Make it two hundred.

MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT

All right I will. You're the kind of guy I like. Right on your toes.

You'll go big in this town, boy.

You can buy stock on margin with that two hundred an' make a little capital and go into a confidence game or sell bonds. You'll get rich and ride home in your Lincoln Eight up Fifth Avenue every evening and stop to have a cocktail at the Plaza to take the smell of money out of your mouth and pick up your girl and go for a ride in the park with her in your arms and sit dining with her at the Casino in the dusk.

You've been asleep all this time, boy. It's money you've been wanting and didn't know it, traveling round the world, working your way on steamboats, bumming from town to town, looking for something you didn't know what.

YOUNG BUM

I won't never git rich. I ain't the kind. But I jus' got to have some eats. Two days without eatin's more'n any guy kin stand.

MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT

Then you're on? We've got a bit of business in a house a few blocks from here. All you guys need do is stay at the back door an not let anybody come in or out while we're busy upstairs. Get that?

YOUNG BUM

When do we eat?

MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT

Right now.

[*They go off. The* OLD BUM *on the bench stretches himself. People pass.*]

TELESCOPE MAN

Take a look at the marvels of the moon, see the craters, mountains, dried out seas. [*After awhile he sits down on the bench.*] Business pretty slack this evening I tell you. I won't cover the rent on the instrument today.

OLD BUM

[*Stretching himself*]
I'm tired of settin'.

TELESCOPE MAN

That dude's no good. His face is too white. These fellows won't come to any good in with that guy.

OLD BUM

They won't come to no good, anyway. Not in this town. No one comes to no good in this town.

TELESCOPE MAN

Why did you come to New York.

OLD BUM

Cause I had to.

Listen here. I been north an' I been south. I been in Athabasca and the Klondike, an' Guatemala an' Yucatan, an' places I never knowed the names of. I was a year on the beach at Valparaiso, till an earthquake shook the rotten town down round my ears, an' I've picked fruit along the Eastern Shore, an' run a buzzsaw up on the Columbia River.

An' everywhere folks is thinkin' of this town, wishin' they were here, packin' up their clothes and sellin' out their stock and movin' here, an' leavin' their wives an' kissin' their mothers goodby to come here.

It's a rare life for them guys on the inside track. I've heard all about it in my time. . . .

An' how behind the iron walls there's roofs gardens

full of sweetsmellin' flowers like Fayal in the spring. An' how they set each other up to banquets in rooms where everything's velvet an' soft an' sit there eatin' pheasants an' French peas an' Philadelphia poultry, an' beautiful young actresses come up out o' pies like the blackbirds an' dance all naked round the table.

TELESCOPE MAN

I'ts not like that. I was born in Brooklyn an' raised in the Bronx, and I know.

OLD BUM

I been east an' I been west an' everywhere in shanties and bunkhouses. I seen folks readin' magazines an' newspapers an' Sunday supplements all about this town an' the crooks an' the murders an' the banquets an' the millions that's made an' the millions that's lost. An' everywhere I heard folks say when they stopped readin' or hearin' a travelin' man talk 'Christ I'm goin' to see that town before I die' or 'Mebbe I could be famous there an' make a million dollars an' have my name in the papers an' ride up Fifth Avenue in my own limousine.'

From Mexico to the Saskatchewan they're all thinkin' the same thing.

TELESCOPE MAN

No good comes of them when they get here.

OLD BUM

Got any pipefillin's?

TELESCOPE MAN

Here's some Bull.

If it warn't for astronomy an readin' the encyclopedias at the library nights I couldn't stand it.

It's not like that.

I was born in Brooklyn an' raised in the Bronx and I know.

Every day they're tied tighter in ticker ribbon an' typewriter ribbon till they can't move, till they don't have time to look at the moon though a dime's cheap at that for the use of a high-power telescope. An' they don't have time to look at each other or in women's eyes and they've ground their lives little like sausage meat an' crushed their lives in stone crushers an' clanked 'em out into smudgy black picayune letters in printing presses.

In all the offices there are red-varnished desks an' yellow-varnished desks an' typewriters clucking an' chirruping like canarybirds an' all day the gray ash drops from the cigars of fat men in swivel chairs an' tickers roll out fours an' eights an' dollar signs an' ciphers, reeling out millions that don't exist. In all the houses, in apartments like shoeboxes women in sacques and old pink kimonos, women in yellow stained aprons with curlpapers in their

hair that's henna red an' peroxide yellow sweep up dust, an' fat men an' tall men an' lean men an' short men wear out their lives rubbing their pants on swivel chairs.

An' the tickers wear out their cogs ticking millions that don't exist, fours an' eights an' dollar signs an' ciphers, an' the women sweep up dust an' redden their lips.

[*Music like for a recitation of "The Face on the Barroom Floor."*]

And time slips through among the garbage cans in the canyon streets.

Time is a great snake writhing through gray streets, wearing away angles of stone cornices, wearing ornaments off marblefaced sepulchers, wearing away the corners of the staring oblong windows of brownstone houses. Time is a gray ash dropping from the souls of fat men in swivel chairs.

And all the typewriters and all the tickers and all the little heels of errand girls tapping on hard pavements go clicking faster and faster to catch up to the ticktack of the clocks.

Time has his undertaking establishment on every block and drives his coffin nails faster than the steam riveters rivet or the stenographers type or the tickers tick out fours and eights and dollar signs and ciphers.

I was born in Brooklyn an' raised in the Bronx and I know.

OLD BUM

[*Gets to his feet*]
I'm tired o' settin'.
[*People pass.*]

TELESCOPE MAN

[*Runs to his instrument and starts calling out*]
Take a look at the marvels of the moon, craters, mountains, and dried out seas.

TOM

[*Comes in walking stiffly, his face set and white. Goes up to the telescope man. For a moment he can't speak. Then he says gruffly:*]
Let me look. I've got a dime now.

TELESCOPE MAN

What's the matter? You're trembling.

TOM

When I was a kid I used to tell myself the moon was a silver gong and if I could climb high enough to beat on it with both hands all my wishes would come true. The moon's trembling too like quick-

silver. How waste and tired the moon looks through the telescope.

I haven't any wishes now.

OLD BUM

[*Wrenches him round by the shoulder*]

Say where's the kid? What have they done to the kid?

TOM

I don't know; he'll be along in a minute.

OLD BUM

What's the matter? What happened? Is everything cleaned up?

TOM

Listen.

[*The* MAN IN THE STOVEPIPE HAT *has walked in and stands in the center of the stage back, with the light full on his skull-like chalk-white face. Police whistles are heard off stage. Then a shot. The young bum runs in, his hands outstretched, tottering, screaming with terror like a person in a nightmare. Shots. He falls. Policemen follow with smoking automatics.*]

BABOONFACED POLICEMAN

Winged him one.

GORILLAFACED POLICEMAN

Careful he may have a gun.

BABOONFACED POLICEMAN

He ain't playing possum. I winged him I tell you.
[MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT *stands over the body with his arms crossed. Leans and feels for the heart.*]

BABOONFACED POLICEMAN

Is he dead, governor?
[MAN IN STOVEPIPE HAT *nods.*]

BABOONFACED POLICEMAN

Gorry I didn't mean to kill him.
[*The* OLD BUM *has taken one look at the body and dropped on the bench, sobbing.*]

GORILLAFACED POLICEMAN

An' him dyin' in his sins without a priest.

TELESCOPE MAN

What did he do?

GORILLAFACED POLICEMAN

He was in on a big burglary down on Washington Square. He resisted arrest.

NEWSBOYS

[*Running in*]

Extra, extra. Big Washington Square burglary. One million dollars in gems stolen. Scrubwoman murdered. Extra.

[*The stage is full of people—fat men with cigars out of offices, loafers, shopgirls, Jewish and Italian families with babies and children. Jingle of an ambulance off stage.*]

BABOONFACED POLICEMAN

Here's the ambulance, Pat.

[*Attendants start carrying the body off.*]

NEWSBOYS

[*Off stage, still shouting.*]

Extra, million dollars in gems stolen. Scrubwoman murdered.

OLD BUM

Stop here, you cops. I know the guy who did it. Framed it up beside this here bench. I heard it all. That big stiff in the stovepipe hat, he told em he'd give em a hundred dollars each, an they double-crossed the kid. He was a nice simple kid. Wasn't no match for em. So they croaked him. Him and me bummed together. I liked the kid. [*Goes over*

to Tom.] This is the other one. [*Grabs* Tom *by the coat.*] Hold em both for murder.

Man With Stovepipe Hat

Officer, this man is crazy. I was walking home from the opera and happened to be beside the boy when he fell.

Newsboys

Burglary, burglary. Million dollars stolen.

[Tom *makes a sudden break as the cops come up, leaving his coat in the Old Bum's hands. He turns and runs clear across the stage, dodging the policemen, and off. Whistles and shots recede in the distance.*]

Orneryfaced Policeman

I'll hold this guy anyway as a material witness.

[*Drags off the Old Bum by the coat collar.*]

[*The stage is full of people, talking excitedly in knots.*]

Girl in Red Hat

An he was just a young kid.

Young Man

What did the bulls shoot him for?

GIRL IN RED HAT

Stole a million dollars in gems.

YOUNG MAN

Myrtle, if I had a million dollars you wouldn't turn me down cold like you do every evenin'.

GIRL IN RED HAT

[*Giggling*]
We'd be married then, Joe.

YOUNG MAN

An suppose one of us got bumped off like that kid while we was waitin'.

[*From out of the crowd comes the voice of the* TELESCOPE MAN.]

TELESCOPE MAN

Take a look at the marvels of the moon. Ten cents. Her craters, mountains, dried out seas, ten cents.

[*As curtains come together a grindorgan starts playing "Three o'Clock in the Morning."*]

SCENE 2

A back yard in downtown New York. In the distance across building lots through a bluish curtain of smoke and dust there is a pearly shimmer of skyscrapers rising near the middle to the Woolworth

tower. Along the back of the stage slants a low board fence black and jagged with here and there a board fallen away—in front of it a double rank of garbage cans. At angles across the sides of the stage the brick flanks of two tenements, right, three windows on a fire escape from the different levels of which clotheslines hung with various colored washing run to the fence. Left three windows but no fire-escape. A door under the lowest landing of the fire escape.

MRS. HALLORAN, *a mealbag-tied-in-the-middle of a woman, is hanging out the week's wash that she takes piece by piece out of a big square laundry basket. Off stage a grindorgan is playing "Three o'Clock in the Morning." It is late afternoon.* TOM, *coatless, unshaven, covered with soot and dirt, appears at the top of the fire escape and starts climbing down cautiously.*

MRS. HALLORAN

Oh that wop music near makes my head split. They always come to play and bother me when I'm doing the washin' too. Ought to be a law again them wops playin' on wash day.

TOM

[*In a cautious breathless voice*]
Can you tell me which floor Jane Carroll lives on?

MRS. HALLORAN

I don't know no such party. And p'raps you kin tell me what you're doin' on that there fire escape.

TOM

I was taking a little walk on the roofs. So warm today, isn't it?

MRS. HALLORAN

Well you'll just come down off there before I call the police.

TOM

[*Sitting down on the lowest landing*]
But I must see that girl. I must see Jane Carroll.

MRS. HALLORAN

And what does she look like, this party you're asking for? There's none o' your kind, there's famous people, ladies and gentlemen living in that house. I've a great mind to call a cop as it is.

TOM

Her hair is smoky color, not chestnut and not sandy. She has goldenbrown eyes and a firm mouth and she stands very straight and supple like somebody just going to dive.

MRS. HALLORAN

She ain't Janet Gwendolen the actress, is she? But you're kiddin' me. You're great on the blarney, you are. You're a second story worker, that's what you are. If ye move I'll screech and call in the neighbors.

TOM

Second story workers dress swell in white collars. I'm all in rags and I lost my coat.

MRS. HALLORAN

Aw go 'long wid ye. Trash like the rest of 'em. It takes the likes of me to do the work in this world. Talk, that's what you want to do. There's nobody in the bloomin' city wants to do any other thing than talk and raise dust for folks like me to clean up.

TOM

I used to talk. I don't any more.

MRS. HALLORAN

What do ye do then?

TOM

Nothing.

MRS. HALLORAN

You come down off that fire escape and empty out your pockets or I'll screech for the police.

[JANE *appears at the opposite window, sticks her head out on a level with* TOM'S. *She wears a fancy apricot colored kimono and her hair is curled and fluffed high on the top of her head. She stares at him without speaking.*]

TOM

Jane, I saw you across Union Square last night when there was a moon.

JANE

[*Speaks stage English in an affectedly silvery voice.*]

What were you doing there, Tom? The moon was so beautiful. I just couldn't go to bed.

TOM

Trying to bum a quarter for something to eat and a bed.

JANE

How extraordinary. But I'm so anxious to hear. Where have you been? Do come down. I can't stay talking to you on the fire escape like this.

[MRS. HALLORAN *has stood watching them, arms*

akimbo. She shrugs and goes back to the washtub.]

TOM

How's that?

JANE

One of the misfortunes of being well known, I suppose. It is simply dreadful how they keep watch on me on this block. You do look ragged.

TOM

[*Has been staring at her.*]
[*Speaks nervously.*]
But I hadn't expected to see you like this. Jane, what's happened to you?

JANE

Time, Tom dear, time. It's five years I've lived in New York.

TOM

[*Tenderly*]
I've thought about you a great deal. I said to myself I wouldn't think of you, but I had to. If we could only go free of our memories.

JANE

What have you been remembering about me?

TOM

How you looked on the steps of that Pullman car, how you looked under the lilac bush in the back garden.

JANE

Funny kids we must have been. I've been too busy to think these last years. Oh Tom, haven't you known?

TOM

What?

JANE

The hits I've been making. I've been so successful. I could sign up a contract for five hundred a week anytime I wanted to.
[*She throws her arms out.*]

TOM

I've been places and had jobs and thrown them up, and I've had friends and quarreled with them, and I've made love to pretty women and their love has crumbled like ash in my arms. Nothing has turned out very well. . . .

JANE

[*Breaking in*]
I'm crazy to hear all about it. It's just that there are some people coming . . .

TOM

[*Goes on importunately*]
Yesterday. Yesterday was very horrible. I was in a burglary yesterday. An extra in a burglary. They killed an old woman.

JANE

[*Excitedly*]
The million dollar gem robbery.

TOM

They killed the kid who was in on it with me. I shall never forget the face of the man who got away with the swag, carried off the diamonds in a black portfolio. He had a white face like a skull. When I remember it, it seems to writhe like worms. All I made out of it was some change from a dollar we spent for a feed.

JANE

The million dollar gem robbery.

TOM

The police are after me now. I had drifted so long. I felt I must do something. Oh I'm such a bungler.

JANE

If we only had time. You can't be here when those people come.

TOM

Jane, it's not the police I'm afraid of. It's that everything's bungled. That green white face, like verdigris. Like a face rotting in a grave.

JANE

You don't seem to think of me at all. My career is precious, my art means everything to me. You can't be here when those people come. It's just that I hate explaining things, and they wouldn't understand. They don't know anything about you.

TOM

Jane, I can't get used to you this way.

I've been in Abyssinia, Jane. All I did there was get malaria.

Kurdish bandits on Ararat captured me when I was trying to take a caviar caravan to Damascus. I picked up a pile of money in an oil deal at Cuer-

navaca and I lost it the next day in a poker game with an Albanian.

I have thought I was living deep. I've spoken all sorts of languages and worn all sorts of clothes.

Jane, without you I've bungled everything.

JANE

But I insist upon your going. You shan't intrude upon my life like this. Come back some other time and tell me about where you've been and everything.

[*The grindorgan is playing "East Side, West Side, All Around the Town," far away.*]

TOM

Listen.

JANE

Well?

TOM

Don't you remember how we'd lean out of the window hot summer afternoons and the tunes the grindorgan played would nearly drive us mad?

JANE

You said you wished you had no memories. Perhaps I really haven't any memories.

[*The grindorgan stops abruptly.*]

TOM

I'm going.

[*Jane disappears into the room.* TOM *drops down from the fire escape into the yard, and goes up to* MRS. HALLORAN.]

Is there any chance, ma'am, of getting a room here, in one of these houses?

MRS. HALLORAN

[*Without looking up from the laundry basket*] Not much chance for you, the disreputable you look. It's looks that count in the big city, young feller.

TOM

But I haven't any money.

MRS. HALLORAN

Well, how are ye goin' to get a room then?

[*Police whistles begin off stage.*]

TOM

They must have seen me climb up on the roof. It's all up.

MRS. HALLORAN

Is it the cops that's after you? [TOM *nods.*] You aren't a murderer are you? I couldn't hide a murderer.

[*Another whistle nearer.*]

TOM

[*Slowly*]
I've always just looked on. I've never done anything but make up lies.

MRS. HALLORAN

I ain't seen ye climb into that laundry basket.
[TOM *climbs into the laundry basket. She throws some clothes in on top of him; then she goes on hanging things out on the line. From one of the apartments comes the sound of a phonograph playing the Sextette from Lucia. After a moment two cops and a* PLAIN CLOTHES MAN *appear in various corners of the stage. They walk stealthily about, talking in time to the Sextette.*]

PLAIN CLOTHES MAN

[*His sentences are staccato and businesslike*]
Sshush. He'll be round here somewhere I bet you men.

GORILLAFACED POLICEMAN

I saw the way he looked at a girl who lives here, like he'd eat her up with his eyes. He'll be hanging round here sooner or later. Watch this house and you'll get him. Sshush.

THE THREE OF THEM

[*To* MRS. HALLORAN]

Sshush. You ain't seen no suspicious-lookin' characters round here, have you?

MRS. HALLORAN

I seen nothin' except the washtub since I made my husband his mornin' breakfast.

PLAIN CLOTHES MAN

A lot of ash cans you have there.

MRS. HALLORAN

It sure is a city for rubbish and garbage. An it's many a day now since the garbageman came.

PLAIN CLOTHES MAN

It's outrageous. We ought to notify the Commissioner.

MRS. HALLORAN

And who may you be notifyin' the commissioners an the like?

[*As the* PLAIN CLOTHES MAN *pulls open his coat with the regulation gesture there is a crash from the orchestra.*]

MRS. HALLORAN

A secret service man are ye?

PLAIN CLOTHES MAN

My name's Scald from headquarters. I was watching the wobblies on Union Square. They shifted me to this burglary case.

We've got to get the guy we're looking for, see, because we bumped off the other one and couldn't make any arrest.

We've been looking for him all day tramping over the roofs poking round in back alleys. There's a cordon round this block so he won't get away.

GORILLAFACED POLICEMAN

We've looked in the upper halls of all the apartment houses and peeked down through all the skylights where there were women biting off thread and stringing beads and making paper flowers all of a tremble at the sound of footsteps on the roof.

MRS. HALLORAN

It's scary the women are in this city. If they did work washin' an' ironin' an' scrubbin' the front stairs they wouldn't be thinkin' so much about what somebody might do to 'em who broke in.

BABOONFACED POLICEMAN

He's a young brownfaced feller we're looking for, skinny and ragged an he'll come here wanting to see a girl.

PLAIN CLOTHES MAN

Remember there'll be a reward upon him. Too damn much publicity this burglary's getting. We've got to make an arrest or there'll be hell to pay.

[PLAIN CLOTHES MAN *and the two policemen go off right as the Sextette screeches and stops.* TOM *is just poking his head out of the basket when the two* YOUNG MEN WITH COLD CREAM FACES *lean out of* JANE'S *window.*]

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Oh Miss Gwendolen let's have tea in the back yard.

SHORT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Do let's; it's so beautiful in the back yard.

CULTIVATED VOICES

[*Inside*]
Oh let's, do let's.

[*A phonograph in the opposite apartment house has started to play the "Yankee Patrol."*]

MRS. HALLORAN

[*Over her washtub*]
Oh it's talkin' they'll be an' raisin' dust an' divil a bit more wash will I get hung out this day.

[*A big pearshaped flabbyfaced man in a checked*

suit wearing a Panama hat comes in. He talks in a confidential in-the-know tone.]

MAN IN THE PANAMA HAT

[*Sidling up to* MRS. HALLORAN]
Party named Gwendolen live round here?

MRS. HALLORAN

Ye mean Miss Janet Gwendolen?

MAN IN THE PANAMA HAT

Um-hum. . . . Been having many callers lately?

MRS. HALLORAN

And why shouldn't she have callers the darlin'?

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

Do you know anything about what they talk about when they come?

MRS. HALLORAN

It's all alike to me, they talk an' act silly an' raise dust.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

I'm from Washington you understand. I should like to install a little instrument. [*From out of a box under his arm he produces an exaggerated dictograph.*] A little instrument, a dictograph. Very suspicious talk round here. Seditious.

MRS. HALLORAN

Saints and martyrs it's a bomb.

[*She backs away from him.* THE MAN IN PANAMA HAT *gets tangled in the wires trying to coil them back into the box.*]

JANE

[JANE *comes out theatrically*]
Did you want to see me?

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

Miss Gwendolen, I am touched. This is a very great pleasure.

JANE

What is it please?

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

[*Looks about cautiously*]
Miss Gwendolen, I come to you as a friend. These are dangerous times. . . . What was that?

JANE

What?

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

I thought I saw that laundry basket move.

MRS. HALLORAN

Nothin' but soiled clothes. He must a been drinkin'.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

[*Under his breath*]
Peculiar, suspicious, seditious.

JANE

Won't you stay to tea?

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

With pleasure, Miss Gwendolen. Now my dear young lady, as they used to say down on the farm, a nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse. [*He takes a roll of manuscript from his inside pocket.*] Please just glance over this little story. Not released yet you understand, not released.

JANE

Why it's outrageous; that's not my photograph. I've never been in Little Rock in my life so I can't have been divorced. I haven't got a husband who's a plumber and I've never been in a Federal penitentiary.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

It's not released yet, my dear young lady, nor will it be if I can help it. I don't believe it myself

but you know in the words of the poet "The moving finger writes and having writ" and all that sort of thing.

JANE

It's an outrage.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

Don't let it worry you a minute. The police are endeavoring to link your name with the million dollar gem robbery.

JANE

Look here are you crazy?

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

You see they want something that'll go big in the papers. A sensational cleanup of highclass crime. But they can't touch you not while I'm protecting you. Not if I have to indict every member of the New York police force.

JANE

What are you here for anyway?

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

You realize, my dear young lady, that we are living in parlous, troublous times. You live in a network of sedition, my dear young lady, beautiful

butterfly that you are among the foul spiderwebs spun by aliens and bolsheviks. All we want of you is just a teeny little bit of information now and then about your dinner-guests and tea-guests and supper-guests and if perhaps there should be an investigation, a little bit of testimony.

[*The music has burst into "Tea for Two."*]

[*A young man draped in a leopardskin comes in doing an æsthetic dance followed by* He *and* She Intellectuals *dancing with cocktail shakers and teacups.*]

Jane

Good Lord and I'm not dressed yet.

[*She runs into the house.*]

[*The* Man in Panama Hat *snoops about trying to find somewhere to attach his dictograph.*]

[*During their dance the* Teadrinkers *chant:*]

O, yes, investigating conditions
Among the garment workers did you say?
How very interesting . . . conditions are alarming everywhere.
Would be alarming were it not . . . for the new spirituality now springing up.

She Intellectual

Spiritual solidarity.

HE INTELLECTUAL

We must master our drift.

TEADRINKERS

Educate and enlight both capital and labor . . . build up an intelligent nation on scientific lines.

If we have time next fall we'll look . . . into social restlessness a little.

Fascinating subject for a novel. . . . Look at the crime wave.

The result of the weakening effect. . . . of influenza on the moral centers.

It is the end of civilization . . . of everything we hold most dear.

HE INTELLECTUAL

I wouldn't have to run my column any more . . . that certainly would be an unmitigated blessing.

SHE INTELLECTUAL

In a time like this everyone must . . . put his shoulder to the wheel.

[JANE *appears in the door with a kettle of hot water and a tray of cakes in her hands*]

TEADRINKERS

Miss Gwendolen.

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Isn't Janet Gwendolen just too lovely in that dress?

TEADRINKERS

Wonderful, marvelous, wonderful, marvelous.

[JANE *sits at the tea-table and starts pouring tea.* THE MAN IN PANAMA HAT *comes up to her confidentially. He's holding the dictophone with trailing wires behind him and trying to slip it under the tea-table.*]

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

Well, my dear young lady. Do you want to see that very interesting little story plastered on every front page in every city in the country? We've got another little yarn about how you have colored blood. Or will you co-operate with the Department and tell us all you know about parlor bolshevism and about the million dollar gem robbery?

JANE

Give me time to think. I don't understand what it's all about.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

I can give you five minutes.

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Do you know what today is, Miss Gwendolen?

JANE

[*Looking up archly*]
No; what?

SHORT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Don't you read the papers?

JANE

Why should I when I know the people who write for them?

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Today is being celebrated as Prosperity Day.

FAT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

To avert the financial panic.

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

There's going to be a great parade from Battery Park to Columbus Circle.

HE INTELLECTUAL

It's going on now. The Mayor and all the ward-bosses are going to march at the head of it.

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

The Governor is going to broadcast a speech about Prosperity to all the radio stations.

JANE

What a shame we're too lazy to go out to see it.

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

You shouldn't. Fighting through the crowd would be so tiresome.

SHORT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

It would be exhausting. You must keep your energy for your art.

FAT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Crowds are so disgusting when you are in them.

[*Back beside the fence,* MRS. HALLORAN *has hung out the last bit of washing. It has become very dark.*]

[*In the center back in front of the fence the* GARBAGE MAN *has appeared. He wears blue overalls. His face is the face of the* FAMILY PRACTITIONER, *the* MAN IN BLACK OVERALLS, *the* MAN IN THE STOVEPIPE HAT *only more chalky and skull-like. As he leans to pick up a garbage can he laughs.*]

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

I wonder if you think so Miss Gwendolen.

[JANE *is staring at the* GARBAGE MAN. *She gets to her feet, goes two or three paces towards him and then falls in a faint with a choked nightmare scream.*]

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

What's the matter? Pick her up.

SHORT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

She's fainted.

SHE INTELLECTUAL

She's under a nervous strain.

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Miss Gwendolen has broken down.

SHE INTELLECTUAL

How dreadful.

FAT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

She's prostrated.

[*At the sound of her scream* TOM *has jumped out of the laundry basket and come forward, limping with stiffness, still tangled in a sheet. He lifts her in his arms. Front.*]

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Who's that?

SHORT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

It's a tramp.

HE AND SHE INTELLECTUALS

It's a burglar.

TEADRINKERS

[*In unison*]
He's a spy from the Department of Justice.

[TOM *elbows his way through them and faces the* GARBAGE MAN.]

TOM

Who are you?

GARBAGE MAN

[*Laughing*]
Just the garbage man.

TOM

What did you come here for?

GARBAGE MAN

[*Shrieking with laughter*]
Don't you see that everywhere's littered with waste and garbage?

MRS. HALLORAN

It's about time too he came round. This yard. The way it was warn't no fit place to hang out washin'.

GARBAGE MAN

I reckon I'll have to come back to these premises a bit later. Me wagon's plum full up.

[*He goes off laughing, rolling a garbage can before him. He is heard shouting to the horse off stage.*]

JANE

[YOUNG MEN WITH COLD CREAM FACES *have been putting her head down to the floor. The other* TEADRINKERS *stand around offering cups of tea, glasses of water, bottles of smelling salts.*]

Tom! [*She pulls herself away from them and staggers to her feet.*] Tom!

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Who is it?

SHORT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Who on earth is it?

FAT YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Who can it be?

JANE

Don't make a fuss. It's my husband.

TOM

[*Stands beside her, disentangling the sheet from round his legs*]
You called me, Jane.

MRS. HALLORAN

Gimme that sheet. It's in Bellevue in the ragin' lunatic ward I'll end if you don't give me some peace round here. You folks don't do nothin' but talk an screech and raise dust all day. How d'ye expect me to get the washin' hung out?
[*She goes off left staggering under the weight of the laundry basket.*]

TEADRINKERS

[*Circling round*]
How interesting, her husband.

SHE INTELLECTUAL

How exciting; he looks like a tramp.

HE INTELLECTUAL.

Perhaps we'd better go.
[*The afternoon is growing rosy with dusk. More phonographs are starting to play. People look out of the tenement house windows. Near at hand can be heard rather loud the Overture from "William Tell."*]

TOM

Jane, I'm going to stay round a while whether you like it or not. Remember what you once said about coming out of the ark two by two? Perhaps the ark has shut in on one of us again. I'll stay round and help you spring the lock.

JANE

Oh, if we only had time to talk. If these people weren't all here. If we were away somewhere by ourselves.

TOM

We can always go.

JANE

We can't. We're being watched. [*Talks in her natural voice again.*] We can't. I'm helpless, tied down in the mesh of all this business and these lives. They've got me hobbled, Tom, and gagged and they've put blinders on me. I'm only just beginning to see you clear again and I'm so frightened. I used to have so much nerve.

[*Another phonograph has started the "Japanese Sandman."*]

[*The* TEADRINKERS *start dancing mechanically in corners of the stage.*]

[THE MAN *in* PANAMA HAT *jumps to the front*

of the stage with a small megaphone in his hand.]

MAN IN THE PANAMA HAT

How do you do, people? How do you do, Miss Gwendolen? [*He seizes* JANE's *hand in both his and shakes it solemnly.*] How charming! How informal! A little gathering of brilliant and celebrated people in the backyard, dancing to the sound of the neighbors' phonographs. There's a story in that, Miss Gwendolen. You wait, I shall make some very pretty publicity out of it before I'm through. Well?

JANE

You've got to help us.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

And you'll testify?
[JANE *nods vaguely.*]

JANE

Let me introduce Tom Burns, my husband.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

[*Shakes* TOM's *hand effusively*]
Why it's a scoop.

JANE

Unfortunately it's ancient history.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

Accident bares age-old romance.

JANE

Not quite age-old.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

Of course, of course, and you were a mere child scarcely out of your teens. You naughty children I bet you ran away from high school. Oh this is a windfall. I'll have it in every evening paper in New York. And the Sunday supplements. Think of the space we can fill with a childhood romance. [*To the* TEADRINKERS] But I came to tell you about the parade. The Prosperity Day parade is going to pass this very house.

TEADRINKERS

Isn't it wonderful?

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

This is my plan to get the weekly graphics and the Pathes to run a brief glimpse of Miss Gwendolen viewing the parade. Waving a handkerchief from a window perhaps. Or with your husband on a fire-

escape, so romantic, kissing him with passionate pride and affection as the flag goes by. My hero!

[*They form a group in a spotlight. Music plays a few bars of "My Hero."*]

[*In a low voice to* Tom *he adds*]

Have you any better clothes here? An English sporting blazer would be the thing, photographs so well. Hurry, there's no time to lose. The movie men'll be here in a minute.

Tom

[*To* Jane]

We are fairly good at showing our heels when it comes to getting out of arks, you and I.

Jane

It takes more than that. But you don't know what I've done. I'm caught in a net.

Tall Young Man With Cold Cream Face

Won't you dance with me Janet?

Jane

Why not?

[*They dance away while the loudest phonograph plays "Old Bandana Days."*]

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

[*To* TOM]

This has to go big, I tell you. This is the turning point in Miss Gwendolen's career.

Queer thing, Success. First it's a rumor, somebody has played a little part in a play, written a story or two, won a few thousands on the stock exchange. That's where I come in. [*Phonographs playing "April Showers" have drowned out the others.*] Like a man starting a fire blows the embers, feeds little scraps of light wood first them chucks in a bigger one and a bigger one till everything flares up suddenly and people are talking about him over lunch in uptown hotels and toasting him in red ink in Greenwich Village, and chatting about him in the morning rooms of Fifth Avenue mansions and asking if they've got his name spelled right in the makeup offices of Sunday supplements.

And New York's the world's great broadcasting station. The name crackles on the radio in Hollywood and is whispered about in London and giggled over in Paris. That means fame, money, contracts offered on every hand, advances, retaining fees, dinners, receptions, loving cups presented, mash notes from Arkansas and Idaho. . . . Man, that's Success and I make it.

[*A pause.*]

TOM *is staring at him dumbfounded. Three phono-*

graphs have struck up the "Spread Eagle March."]

[*The* TEADRINKERS *are dancing in the wings, leaving the stage clear.* TOM, JANE *and the* MAN IN PANAMA HAT *dance a* pas de trois, *front.* Two MEN IN BROWN DERBIES *enter simultaneously from opposite sides of the stage shouting in unison*]

Well, my dear Janet, everything is ready for the ceremony.

JANE

What ceremony?

MEN IN BROWN DERBIES

You said you'd marry me today.

TOM

But God she's my wife.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

He don't count. He's under indictment.

JANE

It's all a mistake. It's all a horrible mistake.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

Leave everything to me, my dear young lady. From now on you're in my hands. [*Turns spitefully*

to Tom.] And where were you on the night of July 23, 1917? Ah, that makes you turn pale. I've got your alias, young man.

The Men in Brown Derbies

[*Are doing a softshoe dance on either side of the stage, singing:*]

She's goin' to be my honey-bug;
She's the girl I'm goin' to kiss and hug.
Her boyfriend's a toyfriend an he can't do nutten
If he thinks to raise a stink I'll poke him on the button.
I'm goin' to be her redhot regular certified popper;
She's goin' to be my blueplate grade A legally-spliced mommer.
She's Miiiine.

[*The jazz tune trails off into a fragment of the "Lohengrin" "Wedding March" and the music comes up with a crash as the* Garbage Man *is seen to be standing in the center of the stage.*]

Man in Panama Hat

[*Goes up to him. He pulls at his white street-cleaner cap*]
Well what's new?

Garbage Man

Things are linin' up good, sir. Aloysius P. Bangs the agitator was just run over by a truck.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

There's an indictment won't ever be quashed.

GARBAGE MAN

A belt slipped off and killed three red workers in a Paterson mill.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

I tell you you can't buck the United States Government.

GARBAGE MAN

Ten deportees were drowned in a schooner that went ashore on Fire Island. Tryin' to get back into the Land of the Free, they was.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

I guess the joke's on them.

TOM

[*To* JANE]
Think quick, what are we going to do?

JANE

Stay with me, Tom.

GARBAGE MAN

The cops has a cordon round the block. Say they've got a feller in here wanted for murder. They'll get him, too.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

[*Confidentially, coming forward*]

You young folks interest me. You must come back to Washington with me immediately. I'll have you sworn in as special agents of the Department of Justice. You can leave with me in my car. The police won't dare arrest you while you are with me. You have suspicious friends. You'll be useful to us. See this garbage collector? He's an agent of mine. These gentlemen are agents of mine. [*The* MEN IN BROWN DERBIES *take off their hats and bow.*] Every loyal American should be an agent of the Department of Justice.

TOM

What have we got to do?

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

What you're told. You must do what you're told, say what you're told, know what you're told.

JANE

He's saving your life, Tom.

GARBAGE MAN

[*Laughing*]

They all save their lives in the end. I find em wrapped in newspaper and dropped into swillpails,

put away on saucers in the icebox, tucked into pill-boxes in bureau drawers, locked up with bonds in safe deposit vaults.

TOM

I'm letting go my hold. How can I pull you out of this, Jane, if you're tied in so tight.

JANE

It's a tarbaby. I'm getting stuck, Br' Rabbit.

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

I must phone the Department to tell them I've got their little bit of testimony. If either of you stirs a step . . . see that fence; there are bulls behind that fence with their automatics ready to turn you into a pair of sieves if you stir a step.

[*Newsboys run across the stage in both directions crying "Prosperity Parade." When they've gone* TOM AND JANE *are alone on the empty stage. In the distance there's a sound of shouting and a parading band playing "Tammanee." The* TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE *comes up to* JANE. *The music plays derisively "Me and the Boyfriend."*]

Well, Janet?

JANE

O, I can't talk to you now.

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

You've got to, I'm crazy about you. I heard you were in trouble.

TOM

What can you do?

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

I can't do anything. She kept me sitting round all the time waiting for her to get ready.

JANE

Don't be silly.

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

I didn't have much but I gave it to her, and she threw it away in the wastebasket. Now I haven't got anything. I don't know what to do. I can't earn a living. You two are full of wishes, strong; you've got to take me with you.

TOM

How do you know we're going anywhere?

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

You look as if you'd just bought tickets for somewhere.

TOM

Tickets for Sing Sing, tickets for Atlanta, tickets for Washington.

[FOUR REAL ESTATE MEN *with black derby hats on the backs of their heads, cigars in their mouths, march in and up to* JANE *with redseal documents in their hands.*]

REAL ESTATE MEN WITH BLACK DERBY HATS

[*They chant with heavy Yiddish accents.*]
Miss Gwendolen, we regret to announce the painful necessity of foreclosing.

JANE

If they'd only leave us in peace.

REAL ESTATE MEN

The interest hasn't been paid on the first mortgage. The interest hasn't been paid on the second mortgage. Money's tight.

TOM

Can't you wait a few days? I'm arranging Miss Gwendolen's affairs.

REAL ESTATE MEN

The mortgages are foreclosed.
[*Crash of cymbals.*]

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Jane, what are you going to do about me?

REAL ESTATE MEN

This is a meeting of the most important creditors. Where are the assets?

TALL YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE

Blank checks and roses in limousines, lists of prominent passengers arriving on the *Berengaria*, amber lights and breakfast trays.

REAL ESTATE MEN

[*Dance an Indian war-dance round* JANE, TOM *and the* YOUNG MAN WITH COLD CREAM FACE]
Where are the liabilities?

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

[*Comes in rubbing his hands*]
Being duly sworn after having been informed of the nature of the oath the witness deposed as follows. My husband Tom Burns is a dangerous criminal. Still a child he lured me away from my home and left me an unwedded wife beside the railroad tracks on the way to Chicago. Since then his career has shows the earmarks of dementia præcox. He has committed in various states and foreign countries

under various aliases the crimes of murder, rape, mayhem, burglary, assault, arson, sedition, treason.

JANE

I never said it. I never said it.

REAL ESTATE MEN

[*Chant slowly*]
With the amount of the moving picture rights of the trial we will form a million dollar corporation in the state of Delaware, appoint a receiver, and build a fortystory apartment house on this site.
[BOY WITH HIS SHIRT OUT *has appeared astride the fence in the back; sound of distant shouting and bands of music and marching.*]

JANE

[*Desperately*]
What do you see, little boy up there on the fence?

BOY WITH HIS SHIRT OUT

The peerade, the great peerade's coming this way.

REAL ESTATE MEN

Two times two makes four
Four times four makes sixteen
Sixteen times sixteen
That's the way to get rich

[*The back of the stage is filling up with* TEA-DRINKERS *and people off the street, walking in straight files in time to a quickening drum-beat.*]

Concrete sprouting in sixteen dimensions, cogs and belts and gears multiplying sixteen by sixteen.

JANE

[*Like a person in a nightmare*]
I can't move.

TOM

Moving. Everything's moving on us.

REAL ESTATE MEN

Brighter better busier.

TOM

Two hundred streets east and west, two hundred streets north and south, and the tides of people up and down through the worn grooves of the streets, over the polished asphalt, morning tide south, evening tide north, and always their eyes straight before them fastened on two times two, their minds clicking like adding machines, their fingers itching for the round silver pieces, the crinkly green dollars, walking lockstep, shackled in Arrow collar shackles.

JANE

They're marching on us. Pull me out of the way.

MRS. HALLORAN

[*Elbows through the crowd.*]

Ye might help me take in those last bits o' washin' instead o' standin' there talkin' the livelong day.

JANE

Talking's the first step to doing Mrs. Halloran.

MRS. HALLORAN

A lot o' doin'll do the likes o' you. I been livin' in this house twenty years rain an' shine an' I seen 'em come an' I seen 'em go an' every day I do me washin' an' hang it on the line an' take it off the line an' in winter it's froze dry an' in summer it's sundry. An' they ain't none of 'em done nothin' but talk. Look at yer hands. You can tell by their hands what folks has done.

BOY WITH HIS SHIRT OUT

[*From the fence.*]

They're coming. There's flags in all the streets and the clerks an' the officeboys is leanin' out of the office winders an' the stenogs and manicure girls. A yallerhaired girl threw a kiss at me she did.

[*There's a sound of shouting in the distance and a*

band playing "Tammanee." The TEADRINKERS *and the rest of them crowd to the fence, leaving* TOM *and* JANE *alone front. It is dusk. The skyscrapers stand out lean against a flaring yellow sky. The fire escapes are crowded and people hang out from all the windows of the tenements.*]

TOM

We've got to break away. We might get away across the roofs.

JANE

[*Grabs his hand*]
Don't go. I'm so frightened.

TOM

Come with me.

JANE

The tarbaby, Br. Rabbit.

TEADRINKERS [*from the fence:*]

They offered me a seat on the bandwagon.
I knew all about it beforehand.
A box in the reviewing stand but I wouldn't accept it.
I had all the inside dope.

VOICE OF THE RADIOPHONE:
[*From one of the windows*]

brrwaying LADIES AND GENTLEMEN *brrwaying* kkrriii IT IS WITH THE GREATEST PLEASURE kkrrii bbrwaying NAY WITH THE PRO bbrwaying FOUNDEST EMOTION THAT I ADDRESS YOU THIS AFTERNOON

TEADRINKERS

The governor's making his address. Listen to the radio.

VOICE OF THE RADIOPHONE:

PROSPERITY LADIES AND GENTLEMEN BROTHER CITIZENS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK bbrwaing kkriiy,

[*Applause.*]

TOM

Jane, there's a full moon tonight.

JANE

The moon is a great gong hung in the sky.

TOM

For a man to drum upon with his two hands.

JANE

If he's the man to do it

[*The band is coming nearer.*]

VOICE OF THE RADIOPHONE:

PROSPERITY IS THE FAIREST FLOWER OF OUR AMERICAN COMMONWEAL WHICH OUR FATHERS TOILED TO

PLANT AND FRUCTIFY IN THE FERTILE SOIL OF THE NEW WORLD bbrrrrrwahng kkrrii AND WHICH HAS FLOURISHED MIGHTILY IN SPITE OF DISCORD AND CIVIL STRIFE THE DASTARDLY PLOTS OF CORRUPT POLITICIANS AND THE HALF HEARTED TREASON OF CERTAIN AMONG US bbrang kkkkriii gr

[*Cheering from the windows and the people in the street.*]

TOM

Are we going down before all this?

[*It is almost dark. Transparencies are going by on the street outside with mottoes.* SAFETY FIRST. WATCH YOUR STEP. A BUSINESS MAN'S WORLD. HUSTLE. BUSINESS BEFORE PLEASURE. *The brass band blares loud "The Yanks are Coming."*]

VOICE OF THE RADIOPHONE:

I CAN SAY WITHOUT EXAGGERATION STANDING ON THE STEPS OF THE STATE CAPITAL ON THIS FINE SUMMER'S DAY THAT OUR COUNTRY IS THE MOST PROSPEROUS COUNTRY IN THE WORLD AND THAT THIS STATE THE VOTERS OF WHICH HAVE DONE ME THE HONOR OF ELECTING ME TO THE HIGHEST OFFICE A CITIZEN CAN ASPIRE TO IS SECOND TO NONE OF THE STATES IN THIS MOST GLORIOUS UNION IN THAT COMMODITY bbrwn kkrriiy MY FRIENDS COMPLETE PROSPERITY WERE OURS WERE IT NOT

JANE

I can't think in all this din.

VOICE OF THE RADIOPHONE:

MEN WHOSE ONLY JOY LIES IN KNOCKING AND COMPLAINING WHO WOULD SOW THE FOUL TARES OF DISCORD AND DISCONTENT IN THE FAIR WHEAT FIELDS OF OUR PROSPERITY kkrribang MEN WHO WOULD AS IT WERE DROP A MONKEY WRENCH INTO THE EASY RUNNING WELL OILED MECHANISM OF OUR BODY POLITIC ggggrikkri

TOM

All I ask is to get out from under and live, or does success mean more to you than that, Jane?

JANE

What's going to happen to us, Tom?

TOM

We either live or we are swept away . . . garbage, waste. These machines make a lot of waste, Jane.

MRS. HALLORAN

And what do you want, you two, anyway?

TOM

To be all alive. To walk alone, not lockstep.

JANE

To see all the sham marble fronts roll up like stage scenery, so the wind of the sea can blow through.

TOM

See that purple cloud above the sunset?

To swing in that cloud like in a hammock, to climb those shiny smoothfaced buildings like greased poles, to make a song out of the rhythm of dynamos and the tramp of workpeople's feet, to soar on it till you danced a double shuffle on the tallest building's lightning rods, beat out ragtime on the roaring gong of the full moon.

[*All the while the parades are going by.*]

VOICE OF THE RADIOPHONE:

[*Has been rasping unintelligibly*]

LAY BARE HIS INTRIGUES DEFEAT HIS FOUL ENDS WITH THE AIM THAT EVERY CITIZEN MAY PROUDLY AND PEACEABLY PURSUE THE CAREER LAID DOWN FOR HIM BY THE FOUNDING FATHERS IN THE CHARTER OF OUR LIBERTIES THE CONSTITUTION NAMELY THE DISCIPLINED AND LEGALIZED PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS OR IN THE JARGON OF OUR DAY SUCCESS WHICH IS PROSPERITY.

[*Loud cheering. On a phonograph a shrill soprano is singing "America." From the parade the drums beat time. Transparencies keep pass-*

ing. BEWARE OF ALIENS. DOWN WITH KNOCKERS. DISCIPLINE MEANS PROSPERITY. DON'T BE A KICKER. THE SMILE GREETS THE DOLLAR. *The full round moon has risen behind the sharp bright lanky purple of the skyscrapers. Flags, banners, people's hats on sticks pass behind the fence, sway with marching time. A constant beat of feet and voices.*]

BOY WITH HIS SHIRT OUT

Hooray for the peerade. Hooray for Prosperity.

[*Voices of Newsies:*]

Extra, Extra. All about the great parade. Extra.

MRS. HALLORAN

Just look at that dust, will ye? A toime they'll have sweepin' up when this is over.

JANE

Don't listen, Tom. Don't listen. There's more than making dirt and cleaning up dirt. There's more than the treadmill. There's the moon.

Look, the full moon hangs above that tall building like a bubble on the end of a boy's clay pipe. The moon is swollen to bursting with all the dreams of the people of the city.

TOM

The moon is beaten flat and tempered like tempered steel by the throbbing desires of men and women.

JANE

A man standing on the roof of that tall building could take the rim of the moon between his hands.

TOM

How many men's desires have beaten against the moon and fallen.

[*The* REAL ESTATE MEN *march round them shouting* "Boom, boom, lots are going skyhigh. Boom, boom." *All point jeeringly at* JANE.] "She's in the hands of a receiver." *They go off.*]

TOM

If it weren't for this loneliness. . . . Jane are you with me? To the last.

JANE

Without you I'm lost, Tom.

[*She has dropped to her knees with her arms round his waist. A new band goes through playing "Marching Through Georgia." Glare and smoke of red fire torches from the parade.*]

VOICE OF THE RADIOPHONE:

IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF PROSPERITY AND BUSINESS INTERESTS DEAREST TO THE HEARTS OF ALL 100 PER CENT NATIVE BORN CITIZENS IT HAS BEEN DECIDED BY THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF TEN THOUSAND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.

[*Cheering.*]

[*All the phonographs start playing at once, "Hail Columbia" and "Old Kentucky Home" sung by barbershop quartettes, stand out above the rest.*]

VOICE OF THE RADIOPHONE:

THAT THERE SHALL BE A LIST MADE OF ALL DISSENTERS KNOCKERS REDS CARPING CRITICS NONCHURCHGOERS WEARERS OF STRAW HATS OUT OF SEASON NONFORDOWNERS LOAFERS DISCONTENTED PERSONS READERS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES DIVORCEES ADVOCATES OF FREE LOVE THE EIGHT HOUR DAY SUBVERSIVE DOCTRINES

MAN IN PANAMA HAT

[*He has an enormous megaphone. Stands on a table with his back against the fence*]

Lynch them. [*Then to the* TEADRINKERS *about him.*] Of course, I don't mean you.

Lynch them. Deport them. Ferret them out. Send in their names to the Department of Justice.

[*Outside the fence the marchers take up the cry.* Send in their names. Deport them. Lynch them.]

VOICE OF THE RADIOPHONE:

NO MAN SHALL LIVE FOR HIMSELF ALONE

THE MARCHERS

[*Beating time.*]

SERVICE SERVICE SERVICE

[*Voice of the radiophone:*]

FOR THE SAKE OF NATIONAL PROSPERITY NO MAN SHALL THINK FOR HIMSELF ALONE NO MAN SHALL WORK FOR HIMSELF ALONE

THE MARCHERS

Our Country 'tis of thee
Land of prosperitee
For thee we slave

[*They are drowned out by massed brass bands and sextettes of saxophones playing "Yankee Doodle." On the phonographs "Holy, Holy, Holy" and the "Hallelujah Chorus" sung by choirs of shrill women's voices.*]

TOM

[*Knocks the* MAN IN PANAMA HAT *off the table and takes his place. Shouts through the megaphone into the din:*]

Voice of the machine, voice of the machine, I defy you.

Without a coat to my back and hungry, unsuccessful, a bungler in everything, I defy you.

I've ridden the rods and scrubbed paint on steamboats to defy you.

I've hoed potatoes and chopped wood and picked apples and packed grapefruit and walked tracks and washed dishes to defy you.

I've been your slave to learn you and defy you. It's not for you that the desires of men and women beat against the silver moon and temper it hard as a roaring gong by the beating of their wants.

VOICE OF RADIOPHONE:

Lynch the slacker. Lynch the doubter. Lynch the misfit.

[*There is a roar from the crowd outside the fence that soars louder and louder with the shriek of the phonographs and the crash of bands that breaks into yells of* "Lynch him. Lynch him."]

[*The fence parts like a gate in the center and the* MAN IN THE STOVEPIPE HAT *comes in with an enormous sheriff's badge on the lapel of his frock coat. He's followed by policemen and the crowd of the marchers in the parade. Their red fire torches fill the back of the stage, behind them transparencies and above the great*

disk of the moon bitten by the tall buildings. Everything is suddenly silent.]

THE MAN IN THE STOVEPIPE HAT

There's the man. I arrest him.

[*A moment's rattle of drums and shriek of instruments.*]

VOICE OF THE RADIOPHONE:

Arrest him.

[*They all advance towards* TOM, *who dodges for a moment, then as the* MAN IN THE STOVEPIPE HAT *is letting his hand drop on his shoulder,* TOM *crouches and runs through his legs. In a second he has jumped on the fire escape and is up the three flights to the roof and out of sight. The policemen follow. The stage is full of a tumultuous crowd running this way and that.* JANE *stands trembling front. Police whistles sound; then fog horns and sirens. The stage becomes gradually empty and dark but for the moon and a greenish glow of a street-light where the* BOY WITH HIS SHIRT OUT *is still straddling the fence.*]

BOY WITH HIS SHIRT OUT

I can see him runnin acrost de roofs.

[*Newsboy runs across the stage:* Extra! extra! criminal escapes!]

BOY WITH HIS SHIRT OUT

He's swingin' from chimblypot to chimblypot acrost de slippery roofs.

MRS. HALLORAN

A lot of fuss over nauthin I call it. An' the house won't be fit to live in for dust.

BOY WITH HIS SHIRT OUT

If dat ain't him shinnyin' up de marbleface buildin', dancin' on de windowledges. I kin see him little like a fly climbin' up de slantin' roof of de tallest buildin'. Make a wish an look over your left shoulder.

MRS. HALLORAN

An sure that's only when the moon is new. It's an old moon an' a rusty moon. A little brass polish on a rag. . . . I'd have it cleaned in a jiffy if I could git up there.

BOY WITH HIS SHIRT OUT

The moon's fresh an' clean as a new nickel. He's dancin' a softshoe dance on de lightnin' rod an' his fists are punchin' in front of him. I'm goin' to make a wish. I want a million dollars an' to live a thousand years an' to have my girl the prettiest girl from

the Battery to the Harlem River. I'm makin' a wish.

[*He falls off the fence.*]

THE GARBAGE MAN

All right, pretty Missy.

JANE

What do you want with me?

GARBAGE MAN

Clearin' out rubbish is my job. You know that.

JANE

I want to live. I've never lived yet.

GARBAGE MAN

The dump's full of the likes of ye, pretty things that git thrown out, bits o' colored papers that flutter and rustle in the cart. The city'd be cluttered and stinkin if I didn't do my job.

JANE

Just a day more.

GARBAGE MAN

A day ain't nauthin; now's the time.

[*The* GARBAGE MAN *has picked* JANE *up and*

staggers off, carrying her like a bundle under his arm, laughing a shrill drunken laugh.]

JANE

[*Swaying her arms with broken doll-like gestures.*]

Tom, I want you. I want you drummer on the moon. Tom.

[*The even moan of the sirens off stage is suddenly cut by a new sound, the roaring clang of a gong loud as thunder, singing softer and softer until it is like the tinkle of a stream on a summer night. The sky and all the buildings are seared by a zigzag white flame. Then blackness and silence. The wheezy little jangle of a hurdygurdy playing "London Bridge Is Falling Down."*]

SCENE 3

JANE

[*Is running in front of the drop showing blocks of gutted factory windows, crying in a nightmare voice:*]

Tom, where are you?

[*At the corner is a glow of a gaslamp.* TOM *stands in it nonchalantly.*]

TOM

Here I am. What's the matter, Jane?

JANE

I thought you were dead.

TOM

We're alive now.

JANE

You drummed on the moon?

TOM

There are things more impossible ahead.

JANE

We are living. We are living.

TOM

While we stand here and talk it runs like sand through our fingers.

[*From behind the windows comes the sobbing croon of vast dynamos. The hurdygurdy tune has faded out.*]

JANE

They are working in there.

TOM

They work night and day.

JANE

Will it always be the same treadmill?

TOM

Tomorrow we'll be working, banging typewriters, shoveling coal, filling greasecups, running with the oil can for the service of the dynamo.

JANE

Today we'll dance with the skyscrapers like with stilts and straddle the street cars like hobbyhorses and weave the clotted colored lights into scarves for our shoulders.

[*The hurdygurdy has started playing again louder than before.*]

TOM

Today runs like sand through our fingers.

JANE

But the creaking merry-go-round of our lives has started again, Tom.

We're on the wooden horse together. The old steam piano is wheezing out its tune and the nine painted ladies are all beating time. Faster and

faster, Tom. Ahead of us the dragon, behind us the pink pig.

Feel the cold air, nothing but the whirl of space in our faces.

SCENE 4

[*The street lamp and the factory windows have flickered out. They stand facing a blue-black sky with a cold greenish haze like the bloom on bronze over it, full of innumerable stars.*]

TOM

Where are we going?

JANE

Somewhere very high. Where the wind is sheer whiteness.

TOM

With nothing but the whirl of space in our faces.

CURTAIN

NOTE

The GARBAGE MAN *was produced in Cambridge and Boston by the Harvard Dramatic Club in the Spring of 1925 under the name of* THE MOON IS A GONG. *Edward Massey directed it with enormous energy and skill and is responsible for the musical comedy method of presentation, certain traces of which I have incorporated into the stage directions. The not too successful New York tryout at the Cherry Lane Theatre in March 1926 was virtually a repetition of the Harvard production.*

Edward Massey's version was particularly important in that it was an attempt to bridge the horrible chasm between the "serious" play that takes itself seriously and thinks that it's ART and the regular Broadway show that everybody is ashamed of, but that manages to keep a houseful of people sitting straight up in their seats from eight-thirty to eleven-thirty six nights a week. This production was out to squeeze every bit of theatre it could get out of the play instead of trying to hypnotize the audience into thinking it was acquiring merit and culture. Neither the play nor the production were good enough to draw many people away from the Winter Garden or the Marx Brothers, but they were good enough to give an inkling of what might happen if anyone had the skill and energy to fuse the two halves of the New York theatre: the "serious" half

that strives for content and that at present attains mostly a lot of empty seats, and the boxoffice half that has, for musical shows, farces and melodramas at least, the technique of showmanship.

The following are the lists of the casts of the two productions: